DISS. ETH NO. 24213

PAX POPULI OR CASUS BELLI? ON THE CONFLICT RESOLUTION POTENTIAL OF SELF-DETERMINATION REFERENDUMS

A thesis submitted to attain the degree of

DOCTOR OF SCIENCES of ETH ZURICH

(Dr. sc. ETH Zurich)

presented by

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2017

Abstract

This dissertation investigates the conflict resolution potential of self-determination referendums. Over the past few decades, the use of referendums in the context of conflicts over secession and autonomy has proliferated remarkably. Self-determination referendums are also increasingly advocated by the international community, from Bosnia to Northern Ireland, East Timor, and South Sudan. However, very little is known about their ability to resolve conflicts over self-determination peacefully. Several perspectives can be found in the existing literature. While some see self-determination referendums positively, others see them as prone to incite violent conflict, and still others argue that self-determination referendums are likely to contribute to peaceful conflict resolution under some but not other conditions. To date, very little systematic empirical evidence exists to support either of these views.

In this dissertation I develop an argument that the conflict resolution potential of self-determination referendums depends on whether their terms have previously been agreed by the two main parties to separatist conflicts, states and self-determination movements. I argue that mutually agreed self-determination referendums are likely to create a positive dynamic and increase chances for peace. Several reasons are made out, all generally related to the high legitimacy associated with agreed self-determination referendums. First, they are likely to foster perceptions of fair decision-making. Second, they may contribute to a reversal of hostile images. Third, they may lead to referendum-related coalitions that are willing to support their outcome. Fourth, they may sometimes push forward a peace process that would otherwise be blocked. And finally, they may increase the durability of settlements and alleviate commitment problems.

By contrast, I argue that if self-determination referendums are unilaterally invoked by a state or a self-determination movement, they become more likely to inflame tensions than to reduce them. The legitimacy of unilateral self-determination referendums is often contested. Unilateral referendums are thus unlikely to have any of the beneficial consequences associated with agreed referendums. Rather, they are likely to entrench grievances, to generate reputation costs, and to reduce the bargaining range available for a negotiated settlement. Thus, unilateral self-determination referendums are likely to increase the risk of separatist armed conflict.

The hypothesized effects of agreed and unilateral self-determination referendums are evaluated through a series of statistical tests. The main challenge this presents is the endogeneity of agreed and unilateral self-determination referendums to conflict processes. Finding agree-

ment on a self-determination referendum often requires a substantial willingness to compromise, whereas this willingness is typically lacking in the case of unilateral self-determination referendums. Thus, while agreed referendums tend to emerge in rather peaceful and benign contexts, unilateral referendums tend to emerge in situations with an already significant ex-ante risk of separatist armed conflict. To counter the emanating threats to causal inference, I employ multiple regression in an effort to partial out the causal effects of agreed and unilateral self-determination referendums. The list of covariates is carefully assembled based on a separate analysis of the determinants of agreed and unilateral self-determination referendums. Relying on new data on self-determination referendums and noncolonial self-determination disputes in European and Asian countries, I find strong support for the argument that prior agreement on the terms of self-determination referendums shapes their conflict resolution potential. In line with expectations, I find that agreed self-determination referendums decrease the probability of new outbreaks of separatist armed conflict while increasing the probability that ongoing separatist armed conflicts come to an end. Also in line with expectations, I find that unilaterally initiated self-determination referendums increase the risk of new separatist armed conflicts and, where violence is already ongoing, the risk that separatist armed conflict continues. An extensive sensitivity analysis reveals that most results are robust to a great number of alternative measurement and specification choices, including fixed effects estimation, as well as to the possibility of hidden bias due to omitted confounders. The only partial exception emerges for the effect of agreed self-determination referendums on outbreaks of new separatist armed conflicts. Overall, the findings of this study suggest that self-determination referendums have value for conflict resolution, but only in situations where agreement can be reached between the key stakeholders on their terms.

Zusammenfassung

Diese Dissertation untersucht das Konfliktlösungspotenzial von Selbstbestimmungsreferenden. Innerhalb der letzten Jahrzehnte hat sich die Zahl der Selbstbestimmungsreferenden stark vervielfacht. Selbstbestimmungsreferenden werden auch zunehmend von der international Gemeinschaft gefördert, so etwa in Bosnien, Nordirland, Osttimor, und Südsudan. Jedoch weiss man bis heute nur wenig über ihr Vermögen, zur fiedlichen Konfliktlösung beizutragen. In der existierenden Literatur finden sich verschiedene Pespektiven. Währenddem einige Selbstbestimmungsreferenden positiv gegenüberstehen, sehen andere in ihnen ein Potenzial zur Konflikteskalation. Wieder andere betonen, dass Selbstbestimmungsreferenden nur unter bestimmten Bedingungen zur Konfliktlösung beitragen können. Bis zum heutigen Zeitpunkt existiert kaum systematische empirische Evidenz, welche eine der verschiedenen Perspektiven erhärten würde.

In dieser Dissertation entwickle ich die These, dass das Konfliktlösungspotenzial von Selbstbestimmungsreferenden davon abhängt, ob sie unter gegenseitigem Einverständnis der beiden wichtigsten Parteien in separatistischen Konflikten—Staaten und Selbstbestimmungsbewegungen—zustandegekommen sind. Ich argumentiere, dass einverständliche Selbstbestimmungsreferenden oft eine positive Dynamik auslösen und die Chancen auf Frieden erhöhen. Dies aus mehreren Gründen, welche alle aus der von einverständlichen Selbstbestimmungsreferenden ausgehenden hohen Legitimität hervorgehen. Erstens tragen einverständliche Referenden oft zu Perzeptionen von gerechter Entscheidungsfindung bei. Zweitens können einverständliche Referenden zur Umkehr von Feindbildern beitragen. Drittens führen einverständliche Selbstbestimmungsreferenden manchmal zu Koalitionsbildungen um das Referendum, welche willens sind, den Referendumsausgang zu schützen. Viertens können einverständliche Referenden manchmal einen Friedensprozess voranbringen, der andernfalls blockiert wäre. Schliesslich können einverständliche Referenden die Resistenz von Abkommen verstärken und Commitment-Problemen vorbeugen.

Im Gegensatz dazu argumentiere ich, dass von Staaten oder Selbstbestimmungsbewegungen unilateral initiierte Selbstbestimmungsrefenden Spannungen eher erhöhen denn reduzieren. Die Legitimität von unilateralen Selbstbestimmungsreferenden ist oft umstritten. Es ist deshalb unwahrscheinlich, dass unilaterale Referenden eine der genannten positiven Konsequenzen von einverständlichen Referenden haben. Eher tragen unilaterale Referenden zur Bildung von Leid- und Frustrationsfaktoren bei, zum Entstehen von Reputationskosten sowie dazu, den Ver-

handlungsspielraum für ein Abkommen zu reduzieren. Unilaterale Selbstbestimmungsreferenden erhöhen deshalb oft das Risiko für bewaffnete separatistische Konflikte.

Die hypothetisierten Effekte von einverständlichen und unilateralen Selbstbestimmungsreferenden werden mittels statistischer Tests evaluiert. Das Hauptproblem hierbei stellt die Endogenität von einverständlichen und unilateralen Referenden zu Konfliktprozessen dar. Währenddem einverständliche Referenden oft ein substanzielles Mass an Kompromissfähigkeit erforden, fehlt dieser Willen zum Kompromiss bei unilateralen Referenden in der Regel. Währenddem sich einverständliche Referenden deshalb oft in eher friedlichen Kontexten ereignen, finden unilaterale Referenden eher in Kontexten mit einem signifikanten ex-ante Risiko für bewaffnete separatistische Konflikte statt. Um den davon ausgehenden Gefahren für kausale Inferenzen entgegenzuwirken wende ich multiple Regressionsmodelle an, um die kausalen Effekte von einverständlichen und unilateralen Selbstbestimmungsreferenden auszupartialisieren. Die Liste der Kovariaten basiert auf einer separaten Analyse der Determinanten von einverständlichen und unilateralen Selbstbestimmungsreferenden. Alle empirischen Analysen basieren auf neuen Daten zu Selbstbestimmungsreferenden sowie zu nichtkolonialen separatistischen Konflikten in europäischen und asiatischen Ländern. Die Resultate stützen das Argument, dass das Konfliktlösungspotenzial von Selbstbestimmungsreferenden davon abhängt, ob sie unter gegenseitigem Einverständnis zustandegekommen sind. In Übereinstimmung mit den Erwartungen finde ich, dass einverständliche Selbstbestimmungsreferenden die Wahrscheinlichkeit von neuen Ausbrüchen von bewaffneten separatistischen Konflikten verringern währenddem sie die Wahrscheinlichkeit erhöhen, dass andauernde bewaffnete separatistische Konflikte enden. Wiederum in Übereinstimmung mit den Erwartungen finde ich, dass unilateral initiierte Selbstbestimmungsreferenden das Risiko von neuen bewaffneten separatistischen Konflikten erhöhen sowie auch das Risiko, dass bewaffnete separatistische Konflikte andauern, wenn sie bereits im Gange sind. Eine ausführliche Sensitivitätsanalyse zeigt, dass die meisten Resultate robust sind gegenüber einer Vielzahl an alternativen Mess- und Modellierungsmöglichkeiten, inklusive Fixed-Effekts-Modellen, als auch gegenüber der Möglichkeit von versteckten Verzerrungen als Resultat von nicht berücksichtigten Störfaktoren. Die einzige teilweise Ausnahme entsteht beim Effekt von einverständlichen Selbstbestimmungsreferenden auf Ausbrüche von neuen bewaffneten separatistischen Konflikten. Insgesamt zeigen die Resultate dieser Studie, dass Selbstbestimmungsreferenden zur Konfliktlösung geeignet sind, jedoch nur in Situationen, wo die Konfliktparteien dazu in der Lage sind, sich auf gegenseitig akzeptable Regeln zu verständigen.

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Acknowledgements

Even if a dissertation ultimately bears just one name, it is always the product of relationships and collaborations with many others. I want to express my gratitude to all those who have made it possible for me to complete this thesis.

I owe my first and deepest note of thanks to Lars-Erik Cederman. It is now almost five years since he agreed to supervise my thesis. At the time, I did not realize what an exceptional honor it was to be admitted as an external. Throughout the years, he provided invaluable advice and pushed my thinking on referendums and conflict significantly. I want to thank him for always having his door open when I needed feedback. I know that not all PhD students are that lucky. The contribution he has made to this thesis and— more generally—my thinking on politics, ethnic and otherwise, cannot be overestimated.

I owe my second note of thanks to Nicholas Sambanis. I benefited from the work we did on self-determination disputes in so many ways that I admit defeat in naming them all. The countless advice he gave me over the years was always spot-on, even if it sometimes took me a while to realize it. Further, I want to express my deepest gratitude to him for agreeing to be my co-examiner, for inviting me to Yale and providing me with everything I needed there, as well as for the opportunity to come to Penn as a postdoctoral fellow.

I also want to thank Simon Hug, my second co-examiner. His work on referendums constitutes a constant source of inspiration, and his comments at the occasion of the retreat at the Lake of Constance have shaped my thinking on self-determination referendums.

I am deeply indebted to Fernando Mendez and Nicolas Aubert. It was Fernando who originally whet my appetite for self-determination referendums. Putting together the Contested Sovereignty data was hard work but also rich in lessons. I especially want to thank Fernando for his patience, his many valuable inputs, and the endless opportunities he offered me, including co-authoring several pieces. Nicolas, I will always remember our vivid discussions on relatively obscure referendums, especially the historical ones. I also want to thank all remaining former

colleagues at the Centre for Democracy Studies Aarau, several of which have, like Fernando and Nicolas, become friends over the years. I want to extend special thanks to Daniel Bochsler, Uwe Serdült and Jonathan Wheatley. I miss our frequent lunches at "the best restaurant in Switzerland"!

Next, I would like to thank Andreas Schädel, with whom I shared a lot of the burden in terms of assembling the data on self-determination disputes. While it is true that I did not frequent our joint office as often as I would have wished, it was all the more fun when I did. I also want to thank Nora Keller and Seraina Rüegger for their help in putting together the data on self-determination disputes, as well as all remaining former colleagues at the chair for International Conflict Research for providing an inspiring and enjoyable work atmosphere. While nobody, to my best knowledge, has yet elevated it to the status of the best restaurant of Switzerland, I still dearly miss our lunches at the 'Asian Mensa'.

I owe a special note of gratitude to Dominik Hangartner, Marco Steenbergen, and Julian Wucherpfennig for providing crucial inspiration in the very beginning of this project. I also want to thank Seraina Ruprecht for refreshing my Latin skills and Beat Müller for his help in localizing information on some of the least well-known self-determination referendums.

While the writing of a dissertation consumes a lot of one's time and energy, life around it does not stop fully. I want to thank all my family and friends for supporting me not only throughout my dissertation work, but throughout my whole life. I especially want to thank my mother, my brother, Leni Altwegg, Elisabeth Gleichauf, Roman Lechmann, and Renato Zoanni, who have all provided continuous support and inspiration. I also want to thank Nadja Bauer, Rahel Bühler, Christian Eckert, Silja Giudici, Manuela Huwiler, Fiona Sartori, Jasmin Schmid, Manuel Schüle, Stephan Schüle, and Stefan Zwicker for constantly reminding that life is not all about referendums and conflict. I also want to thank the missing member of the crowd, Cédric Carrard. I will never forget you! Finally, I want to thank Anja Giudici, my partner. I cannot start to enumerate all the good things you have done throughout these years to support me. Life would be so much worse without you. Thank you for everything!

I gratefully acknowledge funding for this project through grants №135127 and №162220 by the Swiss National Science Foundations.

Micha Germann

Philadelphia, PA, February 2017

Chapter 1

Introduction

Are referendums an apt mechanism for the resolution of conflicts over self-determination? Autonomy and secession referendums have had a number of striking successes. In September 2014, a majority of the Scots rejected independence in a referendum that has widely come to be regarded as a "model for citizen engagement" (Tierney 2016). In May 1998, the peoples of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland affirmed a territorial power-sharing arrangement in a twin referendum that has come to be seen as a crucial turning point in the pacification of Northern Ireland (Loizides 2009, McGarry & O'Leary 2009). Finally, the people of the Jura region in Switzerland voted in the 1970s to separate from the canton of Bern and form their own canton in a series of widely celebrated referendums that have made an important contribution to the peaceful resolution of the Jura question (Buechi 2012, Laponce 2004, Wüthrich 2012).

All three cases suggest that referendums may offer nonviolent resolutions to disputes over self-determination. However, the track record of self-determination referendums is not unequivocal. Sometimes, such referendums appear to have done more harm than good. The referendums held in Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia in the early 1990s are often held to have played a role in igniting the Yugoslav wars (Brady & Kaplan 1994, Kalyvas & Sambanis 2005). A secession referendum held in Northern Ireland 25 years before the above-mentioned referendum on the Belfast Agreement significantly raised intercommunal tensions and arguably contributed to making 1973 the bloodiest year in Northern Ireland's troubled history (Tierney 2012). Finally, East Timor's 1999 vote to separate from Indonesia and become an independent state gave way to large-scale campaigns of violence that killed hundreds and led to the displacement of a quarter of East Timor's population (Fernandes 2011, Schulze 2001).

Are cases such as the referendums held in Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia, and East Timor the

exceptions to the rule? Or are referendums on self-rule generally not a good idea? The question whether referendums should be deployed in the context of self-determination disputes has been debated, in one form or another, for two centuries (He 2002). Nevertheless, opinion on the conflict resolution potential of self-determination referendums continues to be sharply divided. While some see self-determination referendums positively (e.g. Farley 1986, Wood 1981), others see them as prone to incite violent conflict (e.g. Mac Ginty 2003, Reilly 2008, Rudrakumaran 1989), and still others argue that self-determination referendums are likely to contribute to peaceful conflict resolution under some but not other conditions (e.g. Bogdanor 1981*a*, Laponce 2004, Gallagher 1996, Wambaugh 1933). However, while significant amounts of ink have been spilled on the merits and pitfalls of self-determination referendums, little attention has gone to systematic empirical tests of the proposed relationships. To date, there are thus few grounds to prefer one of the different views over the other.

The limited knowledge we still have about the potential of self-determination referendums to resolve (or escalate) disputes over self-rule is troubling, given that self-determination referendums have been proliferating over the past few decades. According to data collected for this study, as many as 274 self-determination referendums have been held since the end of World War Two. The past 30 years alone have seen more than 150 referendums on self-rule. Most of the new states that have come into existence since the end of the Cold War have been legitimized via referendums, including Armenia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Georgia, Montenegro, and South Sudan, in addition to the previously mentioned Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia, and East Timor. The referendum held in Crimea in March 2014 paved the way for Russia's controversial annexation of the Ukrainian territory. Scotland, as already mentioned, recently rejected independence in a referendum, whereas Catalonia endorsed independence in another recent referendum. And there are no signs of the trend towards increased direct popular participation in questions of self-rule abating. Self-determination referendums are currently considered across the globe, including in New Caledonia, Bougainville, Cyprus, Israel, Catalonia, and Kashmir. Crucially, self-determination referendums are often also actively promoted by the international community. Examples include the independence referendums held in Bosnia (1992), East Timor (1999), Montenegro (2006), and South Sudan (2011). International advocacy for self-determination referendums continues, as demonstrated by recent international calls for self-determination referendums to be held in the Western Sahara, Darfur, Abyei, and in the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh (Loizides 2014, Tierney 2012). However, in the absence of solid evidence on

the likely consequences of self-determination referendums for the prospect of peace, such advice occurs somewhat out of the blue.

Violent and nonviolent conflicts over self-determination constitute one of the major socio-political problems of this age. Almost daily the media reports on some struggle for increased self-rule around the world, be it those of the Catalans in Spain, the Scots in the United Kingdom, the Russians in Ukraine, the Chechens in Russia, the Quebecois in Canada, the Tuaregs in Mali, the Kashmiris in India, or the Kurds in Syria, Iraq, and Turkey. According to recently collected data (Sambanis, Germann & Schädel 2016, Germann, Sambanis & Schädel 2016), there were more than 350 ongoing self-determination disputes around the world in 2012, the last year covered in this dataset. While many of these disputes are nonviolent, many also take violent forms. According to this data, more than 30 self-determination disputes involved significant violence in 2012, including the conflicts involving the Palestinians in Israel, the Armenians in Azerbaijan, the Uyghurs in China, and the Kashmiri Muslims in India. According to data collected by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), armed conflict over territorially defined self-rule has become the dominant form of armed conflict in the post-Cold War period (Gleditsch, Wallensteen, Eriksson, Sollenberg & Strand 2002, Melander, Petterson & Themnér 2016).[1] According to the same source, separatist armed conflict has caused more than 220,000 battle-related deaths since 1991.[2] Existing evidence also suggests that armed conflicts over self-determination are particularly intractable and hard to end (Walter 2002, Fearon 2004). As we are likely to see more self-determination referendums in the near future, analyzing in detail the contribution these referendums can make towards the peaceful resolution of conflicts over self-rule, but also whether, and under what circumstances, self-determination referendums have the potential to escalate tensions and cause bloodshed is of high relevance for policymakers and academics alike.

This dissertation seeks new answers to the question of conflict resolution potential of self-determination referendums. While much of the existing literature has tended to cast self-determination referendums as either good or bad for conflict resolution, I follow those who

[1] According to the UCDP dataset on armed conflict, 87 of the 154 armed conflicts fought between 1991 and 2015, or 56%, were intrastate armed conflicts over autonomy or secession. The remaining 67 cases include intrastate armed conflicts in which the rebels sought to capture or change the central government (57) as well as interstate armed conflicts (10).

[2] See version 5 of the UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset. This estimate includes only battle-related deaths, that is military or civilian casualties caused by the warring parties that can be directly related to combat. Other conflict-related deaths, such as deaths caused by famine or one-sided violent attacks, such as terrorism or violent government repression, are not included.

have argued that the relationship between self-determination referendums and separatist armed conflict is likely to be conditional. Building on the idea that self-determination referendums need to be agreed beforehand, I develop a new theoretical framework arguing that the potential of self-determination referendums to promote peace depends on whether or not these referendums have been invoked under the mutual agreement of the two primary actors to self-determination disputes, states and self-determination movements. I argue that if there is prior agreement between these two parties on the terms of a referendum, self-determination referendums are likely to create a positive dynamic that will often increase the chances for peace. By contrast, if either the state or a self-determination movement unilaterally invokes a self-determination referendum, this is likely to increase tensions and the possibility of separatist armed conflict.

In deviation to much of the existing literature, the implications of this theory are subjected to systematic empirical testing. For this, I combine new data on noncolonial SD disputes in European and Asian countries from the SDM-Eurasia dataset (Sambanis, Germann & Schädel 2016, Germann, Sambanis & Schädel 2016) with freshly collected data on SD referendums based on the Contested Sovereignty dataset (Mendez & Germann 2016) and several additional pre-existing sources of data, seeking to isolate the independent causal effects of self-determination referendums on the risk of separatist armed conflict through multiple regression. On the whole, I find strong support for the notion that prior agreement on the terms shapes the conflict resolution potential of SD referendums.

By addressing the nexus between self-determination referendums and separatist armed conflict with new rigor, this dissertation seeks to further our understanding of the contribution these referendums can make to keeping or reaching peace and the circumstances under which such referendums are potentially dangerous and thus better avoided. As such, it speaks to both academic and policymaker audiences interested in escalation and de-escalation processes in the context of disputes over self-determination, the role played by referendums therein, and the conditions under which it does and does not make sense to advocate for self-determination referendums. Ultimately, this thesis suggests that self-determination referendums have value for conflict resolution, but that this value is limited to situations where agreement can be reached between the key stakeholders on their rules. If such agreement is not feasible, self-determination referendums should not be advocated as they are likely to ramp up tensions and increase chances for separatist armed conflict.

1.1 Definitions

Before proceeding with a more detailed overview of the argument made in this thesis, the evidence that is marshaled, and the contributions made to the existing literature, it would be wise to define the key concepts used in this study, namely the 'treatment' (self-determination referendums) and the 'outcome' of interest (separatist armed conflict).

1.1.1 Self-Determination Referendum

When can we speak of a self-determination referendum? First of all, the self-determination referendum constitutes a subset of the more general category of the referendum, so it makes sense to start with a definition of the term referendum. What constitutes a referendum is far from self-evident, as usage of the term varies significantly (Altman 2011). Some, for example, make a clear distinction between legally binding and legally non-binding direct democratic votes and use the term referendum exclusively for binding votes, while referring to non-binding votes as polls or consultations. Lawyers, on the other hand, traditionally use the term referendum for direct democratic votes with national implications, while calling votes with international implications plebiscites (see e.g. Hobe & Kimminich 2004, p. 90, Peters 1995, pp. 30–31, Wambaugh 1920, 1933). In Switzerland, the leading practitioner of direct democracy, the term referendum is reserved for popular votes on government proposals, while citizen-initiated proposals are referred to as initiatives. Completing the conceptual muddle, some also make a distinction depending on the form of voting, reserving the term referendum for decisions taken at the ballot box as opposed to, say, issue votes in town hall meetings.

Following the tradition of leading comparativists on referendums (e.g. Butler & Ranney 1994*a*), this study employs an explicitly broad understanding of the term referendum: *any direct popular vote that is organized by official or at least semi-official authorities.* Referendums as defined must be direct votes on issues (as opposed to elections), must be organized by some sort of an authority (as opposed to polls, surveys, or petitions organized by a private actor), and must involve a popular decision, that is, must be administered to the people (as opposed to decisions taken in representative or otherwise selected bodies). However, other than that, the present definition of a referendum is flexible and inclusive. Specifically, it includes issue votes irrespectively of how they are triggered; referendums as understood may be triggered by political elites (the executive or the parliament), by constitutional provisions requiring mandatory

referendums on certain questions (typically constitutional changes), or via signature gatherings (citizen's initiatives or other types of citizen-initiated referendums). They may be binding or nonbinding. They may be organized by internationally recognized states, by their subnational units, or by quasi-official authorities, such as the authorities of de facto states that lack international recognition (Moldova's Transnistria region constitutes an example). Finally, the way an issue is voted is irrelevant. The latter is particularly relevant to accommodate some of the historical cases. Voting via the ballot box may represent the most common voting method today. But historically other methods enjoyed prominence, and there are few good reasons why votes in town hall meetings or the like should be treated as something fundamentally different.

Having defined the general category of the referendum, when do we speak of a self-determination (SD) referendum? In this study, SD referendums are defined as direct popular votes that deal with the question *whether one or more regions within a state should gain increased self-rule.* Importantly, self-rule as understood here is a variable, not a constant. Naturally, referendums on the ultimate form of self-rule, national independence, are therefore included. A recent example is the Scottish independence referendum. Also included are referendums on whether a region wants to secede and then merge with a its cultural motherland; the referendums in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine on their union with Russia constitute recent examples. However, the present definition explicitly extends to referendums on more limited forms of territorial self-governance, such as the authority to raise and spend taxes locally, regional autonomy over linguistic and cultural policies, or the ability to maintain a defense or police force. The 1998 referendum on Northern Ireland's Belfast Agreement constitutes an example.[3]

SD referendums as defined typically constitute regional votes, that is, they are usually held at the level of the region whose sovereignty is at stake. However, not all SD referendums are regional. For example, the whole of France voted on an autonomy arrangement for New Caledonia in 1988. Three more comments are in order. First, SD referendums are not just referendums on self-rule, but referendums on increased self-rule. They necessarily involve the logic of political separation or disintegration (see Wood 1981). By implication, cases where a currently autonomous unit votes on whether to retain its level of autonomy do not count as SD referendums. For example, the present definition excludes referendums on national unifi-

[3]That said, to count as an SD referendum, the extent of regional self-rule that is voted on needs be politically significant. By implication, referendums on municipal self-government or very limited regional competencies are not included.

cations. Second, referendums on the separation from a supranational entity, such as Britain's BREXIT referendum, are not included. SD referendums as defined here deal with the relationship between nation-states and regions, and not with the relationship between states and supranational institutions. Finally, increased self-rule needs not be the only issue at stake in an SD referendum. Self-rule issues are sometimes voted on in the context of broader constitutional referendums where also issues not directly related to self-rule are at stake. The Belfast Agreement, for example, also included provisions dealing with civil and cultural rights and the decommissioning of weapons. Despite this, referendums such as the 1998 referendum on the Belfast Agreement count as SD referendums.

1.1.2 Separatist Armed Conflict

This study is interested in the extent to which SD referendums increase chances for separatist armed conflict (to which I will also refer as armed conflict over SD) or favor peace, defined here negatively as the absence of separatist armed conflict. Separatist armed conflict is defined as a form of intrastate violent political conflict that confronts incumbent governments with nonstate political and military organizations (the rebels) and is fought over regional self-rule. In line with the above conceptualization of self-rule, this includes conflicts in which the rebels seek outright secession, but also conflicts in which the rebels seek only internal autonomy. In order to count as a separatist armed conflict, this conflict has to be both lethal and reciprocal. That is, there must be casualties on both the government's and the rebels' side. Well-known examples of separatist armed conflict include the conflicts in Croatia and Bosnia in the early 1990s, the two Chechen wars, and the ongoing conflict in Eastern Ukraine.

The present definition of separatist armed conflict overlaps with standard definitions of civil war (see Kalyvas 2007, Sambanis 2004), though there are two important differences. First, civil wars can be fought over any issue, whereas separatist armed conflicts must necessarily revolve around self-rule. For example, cases of civil war where the rebels' only goal is to topple the central government would not count as a separatist armed conflict. Internal autonomy or secession (that is, political separation or disintegration) must range among the rebels' goals, even if it needs not be the rebels' only goal. Second, many operational definitions of civil war require very high numbers of fatalities. For example, the Correlates of War (COW) project requires a minimum of 1,000 battle-related deaths (Sarkees & Wayman 2010). By contrast, the present definition of separatist armed conflict also includes cases of "low-level" civil war with

casualty figures significantly below the 1,000 battle-related deaths threshold. As such, this study follows the approach pioneered by the UCDP database of armed conflicts, which offers coverage down to 25 battle-related deaths (Gleditsch et al. 2002, Melander, Petterson & Themnér 2016).

Finally, while the present definition of separatist armed conflict extends to low-intensity conflicts, it is equally important to note that it does not include all types of violence, even if they could potentially be related to SD referendums. For example, instances of one-sided violence where the state deliberately targets defenseless civilians are not included, given that the violence is not reciprocal (Eck & Hultman 2007). For the same reason, acts of separatist terrorism that do not also involve armed combat are not included. Further, as these conflicts do not pit the state against a rebel group, communal and intercommunal conflicts are also excluded. This includes cases of infighting within separatist movements and of different ethnic groups fighting each other without the direct involvement by the state. SD referendums may be related to all these types of political violence, but this thesis focuses exclusively on separatist armed conflict.

1.2 Argument

Self-determination referendums have significant intuitive appeal. As noted, conflicts over self-rule constitute one of the major socio-political problems of this age. Often, these conflicts take violent forms. Instead of fighting over self-rule, why not let the people decide? Surely it appears desirable to resolve conflicts in a democratic, peaceful way. And what is there more democratic than a referendum? How is it possible that, under some circumstances, SD referendums are dangerous and better avoided?

I argue that the fundamental problem with SD referendums is that they do not necessarily represent a neutral conflict resolution mechanism. SD referendums can be designed in a variety of ways, and they thus carry a significant potential for strategic manipulation. SD referendums, including their design, constitute endogenous outflows of disputes over self-rule, a form of violent or nonviolent political conflict that pits ethnic movements with a claim to self-rule (self-determination movements or SDMs) against their host state. Each of the two sides may introduce referendums to these disputes, but they may do so for very different reasons. States and SDMs tend to have diverging preferences regarding regional self-rule and, by implication, regarding the design of SD referendums. Thus, I argue that a crucial distinction emerges de-

pending on whether or not SD referendums are invoked under the mutual agreement between states and SDMs on the rules of the game. If design choices are taken unilaterally by states or SDMs, SD referendums represent self-serving exercises that are likely to ramp up tensions and increase rather than decrease chances for separatist armed conflict. By contrast, if there is prior agreement on the rules of the game, SD referendums are likely to become accepted as a fair conflict resolution mechanism and, ultimately, to enhance peace.

The idea that SD referendums need to be agreed beforehand has been around for some time (see e.g. Wambaugh 1933, Bogdanor 1981*a*, Gallagher 1996, Tierney 2012). I extend this argument in several important ways. First, I define in clearer terms what agreement on an SD referendum means. Existing theories have remained surprisingly ambiguous in this regard. In deviation, I explicitly note who has to agree (states and SDMs) on what (the rules of the game) and the forms such agreement may take (including explicit documents resulting from formal negotiations but also more implicit forms of agreement, such as mutually uncontested constitutional routines).

Second, I consider in detail the origins of agreed and unilateral SD referendums; their strategic motivations and the circumstances under which these motivations are likely to emerge. In addition to bringing theoretical clarity, this will motivate the crucial insight that incidences of agreed and unilateral SD referendums are endogenous to the risk of separatist armed conflict. Existing theories have tended to blanket the reasons why SD referendums emerge, and thus effectively treated them as if they occurred in a political vacuum. However, finding agreement on the terms of SD referendums requires a significant willingness to make compromises. Conversely, exactly this willingness to compromise is usually lacking when it comes to unilateral SD referendums. Therefore, I argue that agreed SD referendums generally emerge in relatively benign and peaceful contexts, whereas unilateral SD referendums often emerge in decidedly hostile contexts with a substantial latent or manifest risk of violent conflict. As will be discussed below, this bears important implications for causal identification.

Finally, I address in detail the possible linkages between agreed and unilateral SD referendums and separatist armed conflict. Many existing accounts have paid only loose attention to the nature of the causal mechanisms linking agreed and unilateral SD referendums to violent or nonviolent outcomes. However, while the notion that SD referendums can only unfold their conflict resolution potential if they are held under agreed terms may be intuitive, the aim must be to get a good idea why this is so. Drawing on the more general literature on direct democ-

racy and civil war, I clarify existing, often rudimentary, ideas why agreed and unilateral SD referendums are likely to be linked to peaceful or violent outcomes, while extending the list of possible causal mechanisms with several new ones.

More specifically, I argue that a total of five mechanisms account for the potential of agreed SD referendums to promote peace, all related to the high legitimacy emanating from agreed self-determination referendums. First, agreed SD referendums create perceptions of fair decision-making, thus lowering the appeal and plausibility of violent tactics. Second, agreed SD referendums may contribute to a reversal of hostile images. Third, agreed SD referendums are conducive to the emergence of coalitions that are committed to support the referendum process and enforce its outcome. Fourth, in some cases agreed SD referendums have the power to push forward a peace process that would otherwise be blocked. Finally, agreed SD referendums can increase the durability of arrangements between states and SDMs and alleviate commitment problems. While a certain risk of violence cannot be precluded given the often high stakes involved in SD referendums, agreed SD referendums are thus on balance likely to increase chances for peace both in the short and longer term.

Unilaterally initiated SD referendums, by contrast, are unlikely to have any of these beneficial consequences, fundamentally because their legitimacy is contested. Rather, unilateral SD referendums are likely to shore up grievances and thereby create the motivational basis for violence. Further, unilateral SD referendums reduce the scope for a negotiated settlement and can lead to reputation costs for the state. For all these reasons, unilateral SD referendums often make a bad situation worse and yet increase the risk of separatist armed conflict, especially in the short term.

1.3 Evidence

The hypothesized effects of agreed and unilateral SD referendums on separatist armed conflict are evaluated through a series of statistical tests. To be sure, identifying the causal effects of agreed and unilateral SD referendums on separatist armed conflict is not easy. SD referendums do not occur randomly. Rather, as argued above, occurrences of agreed and unilateral SD referendums are likely to be endogenous to the prospect for separatist armed conflict. This significantly complicates causal identification. Naive comparisons of the rate of separatist armed conflict after agreed and unilateral SD referendums are likely to be biased due to the presence

of confounders—background factors that are responsible for the varied political climates that are conducive to agreed and unilateral SD referendums or, more formally, factors that are simultaneously correlated with occurrences of agreed and unilateral SD referendums and the risk of separatist armed conflict.

The ideal methodological solutions available to deal with endogeneity are randomized experiments or natural experiments with as-if-random assignment (Angrist & Pischke 2009). However, neither randomized nor natural experiments are realistic in the present setting. For obvious reasons, SD referendums cannot be randomly assigned in a laboratory setting, whereas situations that credibly approximate the ideal of a randomized experiment in a real-life setting are difficult, if not impossible, to locate for SD referendums. For these reasons, the empirical strategy pursued in this thesis is to use multiple regression analysis in an effort to partial out the independent effects of agreed and unilateral SD referendums on separatist armed conflict.

multiple regression analysis still constitutes the workhorse in political science. But, as is well established, it comes with a strong assumption: selection on observables (Angrist & Pischke 2009, King, Keohane & Verba 1994).[4] In our case, this means that regression-based estimates of the effects of agreed and unilateral SD referendums on separatist armed conflict only have causal interpretation if all confounders are observed and included in the specification. If selection on observables is not met, effect estimates will be biased, leading to erroneous conclusions regarding the effects of SD referendums on separatist armed conflict.

The selection on observables assumption demands extensive consideration of model specification. All relevant confounders—factors that correlate with both the treatments (agreed and unilateral SD referendums) and the outcome (separatist armed conflict) of interest—need to be identified, measured, and accounted for. At the same time, "garbage-can regressions" including irrelevant controls should be avoided, as estimates otherwise become inefficient (King, Keohane & Verba 1994, Clarke 2005). These are ambitious goals under the best of circumstances. In the present case, we face a significant additional hurdle. While scores of scientific articles and books have been published about the causes of internal armed conflicts in general and separatist armed conflict in particular, the question of the factors that give rise to SD referendums has received comparatively little attention. Further, the little evidence that exists suffers from important

[4]The selection on observables assumption is also referred to as the conditional independence, ignorability, or the no omitted variable assumption.

theoretical and methodological problems, including the neglect of the crucial distinction between agreed and unilateral referendums and selection on the dependent variable. As a consequence, there are few pre-existing grounds on which to base model specification. The limited knowledge we have concerning the factors that give rise to agreed and unilateral SD referendums effectively preempts an informed decision regarding what variables should be controlled for.

As a preparatory step, this thesis thus explores the factors that give rise to agreed and unilateral SD referendums. Building on the small existing literature on the determinants of SD referendums, but also on the broader literature on separatist and other contention, I identify a total of 13 factors that are likely to explain SD referendum occurrences while explicitly taking into account that some of these factors are likely to affect agreed and unilateral SD referendums, and in some cases sub-types of agreed and unilateral SD referendums (such as unilateral SD referendums initiated by states or by the separatists), in differential ways. I then evaluate this model using regression models in a correlational-type analysis, using the improved data on noncolonial SD disputes and SD referendums already introduced above. The findings lend support to several of the factors hypothesized to matter for SD referendum occurrences, including a country's level of democracy, de facto independence, protest campaigns, government repression, whether separatists demand outright secession or only autonomy, and diffusion related to temporal dynamics and demonstration effects. Crucially, I find that several of these factors relate in differential ways to SD referendums depending on whether they are agreed or not, thus underlining how agreed and unilateral SD referendums are (partly) products of different theoretical processes.

After this preparatory step, I turn back to the relationship of main interest and test the hypothesized effects of agreed and unilateral SD referendums on separatist armed conflict. Here I will leverage the information gained through the exploration of the determinants of agreed and unilateral SD referendums and combine it with insights from the existing literature on the determinants of separatist armed conflict so as to arrive at a list of relevant control variables. These control variables will then be used in an attempt to partial out the independent effects of agreed and unilateral SD referendums on separatist armed conflict using multiple regression, drawing once more on the novel data sources introduced above. Notably, separate analyses are conducted for separatist armed conflict onset (transitions from peace to separatist armed conflict) and separatist armed conflict continuation (transitions from separatist armed conflict to separatist armed conflict), two phenomena that existing research suggests are in part driven

by different theoretical processes. (According to the present theory, agreed and unilateral SD referendums should affect separatist armed conflict onset and continuation in analogous ways, but the same does not apply to some relevant confounders, such as the level of democracy). In line with theoretical predictions, I find evidence that agreed SD referendums held during ongoing separatist armed conflicts increase the likelihood that these conflicts end. Further, I find evidence that agreed SD referendums reduce the risk that nonviolent SD disputes turn violent in the short, but also in the longer term. In stark contrast to this, my findings suggest that unilateral SD referendums significantly increase the risk of both separatist armed conflict onset and continuation, and in line with theoretical expectations primarily do so in the short term.

Selection on observables remains a strong assumption, despite the detailed consideration given to the choice of control variables. To assess the robustness of the findings, I complement the main analysis with an extensive sensitivity analysis. Most findings turn out to be highly robust. A partial exception emerges for the effect of agreed SD referendums on separatist armed conflict onset, in particular their short-term effect. All remaining effects prove robust across a great number of different specification, measurement, and estimation choices. Crucially, the estimated effects generally also turn out to be reasonably robust in a formal sensitivity analysis, a statistical technique designed to provide insight into the susceptibility of statistical findings to hidden bias due to potentially omitted confounders. In sum, this provides strong support to the notion that the conflict resolution potential of SD referendums is conditional on whether or not there is prior agreement between states and SDMs on their terms.

1.4 Plan of the Thesis

The thesis proceeds as follows. Chapter 2 reviews the existing literature. To frame the debate, I start with an overview of extant controversy on the utility of the referendum in general, and then discuss the literature that focuses explicitly on the conflict resolution potential of SD referendums. Further, I identify several pertinent weaknesses in the existing literature on the conflict resolution potential of SD referendums, including the general lack of systematic empirical testing, but also several theoretical weaknesses that will inform my own theory-building efforts.

Chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework. I introduce the distinction between agreed

and unilateral SD referendums and frame them as catalysts for pre-existing conflict dynamics. Specifically, it will be argued that agreed and unilateral SD referendums tend to emerge under conditions that vary fundamentally with regard to their ex-ante risk of separatist armed conflict, and that agreed and unilateral SD referendums are likely to yet reinforce the pre-existing conflict dynamics.

Chapters 4 and 5 introduce the two most important data sources used in this thesis: the newly collected datasets on SD referendums and noncolonial SD disputes, respectively. The sources and coding rules employed to construct this data are detailed. Further, I use this data to provide historic overviews of the worldwide experience with SD referendums and noncolonial self-determination disputes.

Chapter 6 goes on to explore the determinants of agreed and unilateral SD referendums. As argued, this constitutes an important preparatory step needed to evaluate the conflict resolution potential of SD referendums, but it also makes an independent contribution to the existing literature explaining occurrences of SD referendums. Leveraging what we have learnt about the determinants of SD referendums in chapter 6, chapter 7 then evaluates the empirical link between agreed and unilateral SD referendums and separatist armed conflict. Finally, the concluding chapter restates the central argument and findings, highlights their implications for theory and policy-making, and explores avenues for future work.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Are referendums good or bad? This chapter begins with a short overview of the general debate on the utility of the referendum. After this small excursus, I turn to the more specialized branch of the referendum literature of main interest here, namely the literature on the conflict resolution potential of SD referendums. Next, I identify several weaknesses in this literature that will motivate my own theory-building efforts and the large-N empirical tests presented in later chapters. I conclude with a short summary.

2.2 The Pros and Cons of Referendums

The use of referendums has proliferated remarkably over the past few decades. This applies not only to referendums on self-rule (see chapter 4), but also to referendums on other issues (Altman 2011, Butler & Ranney 1994*c*, LeDuc 2003, Qvortrup 2014*c*). Altman (2011, p. 65), for example, estimates that the number of national-level referendums per annum increased from the low single digits in the early 20$^{\text{th}}$ to in-between 20 and 60 in the late 20$^{\text{th}}$ and the early 21$^{\text{th}}$ century. Evidently, some countries are more to blame than others. For example, Switzerland, the uncontested beacon of direct democracy, regularly holds between 8 and 10 national referendums per year (Serdült 2014). Other heavy users include Italy, Uruguay, and tiny Liechtenstein. However, even when accounting for these outliers, the conclusion that referendums have proliferated remains. It has almost become the norm to use referendums when dealing with fundamental public decisions, such as constitutional changes (Lupia & Matsusaka 2004, Tierney 2012). And

in addition to the increased use of referendums at the national level, there comes a proliferating use of referendums at the regional and local level (Schiller 2011).

Whether or not this development is to be welcomed remains controversial. Some see referendums as an ideal model of democracy. As Bogdanor (1981*b*, p. 189) put it, "acceptance of the referendum is but a logical consequence of accepting a democratic form of government." Advocates of referendums are joined in their fervour by many citizens. Surveys conducted in Western democracies consistently demonstrate strong support for direct democracy (Bowler & Donovan 1998, Dalton, Bürklin & Drummond 2001, Schuck & Vreese, Claes H. de 2015). However, others remain deeply skeptical of referendums, seeing them as democratically problematic, or even anti-democratic. Indeed, the latter view has tended to enjoy stronger support among democratic theorists (Tierney 2012). In what follows, I first review the theoretical debate between referendum proponents and opponents, and then turn to the empirical literature scrutinizing the utility of referendums.

2.2.1 Theoretical Debate

At its heart, the debate about referendums and direct democracy is a debate about how best to realize the principles of democracy (Butler & Ranney 1994*b*, Held 1987, Kriesi 2005). On the one hand, there are those who in the tradition of the ancient Athenians and political theorists including Rousseau (2010 [1762]), Pateman (1970), and Barber (1984) argue that the full potential of democracy can only be unleashed when citizens themselves participate directly in politics.[1] Advocates of referendums see representative democracy as deficient. They argue that representative institutions generate potential for narrow and selfish behavior of representatives that can only be checked by giving citizens a direct say over issues. True democracy, they argue, can only be achieved if citizens can directly set the agenda, discuss issues, and themselves determine the shape of policies. Indirect forms of participation via elected representatives are not, therefore, seen as fully democratic. Only where citizens can directly vote on issues does 'true' democracy exist (Butler & Ranney 1994*b*).

More specifically, advocates of direct democracy see several tangible advantages in referendums (for overviews see Butler & Ranney 1978*a*, Butler & Ranney 1994*b*, Rourke, Hiskes

[1]It should be noted that the participatory or strong democracy envisioned by political philosophers such as Pateman and Barber extends far beyond referendums on public policy matters and demands, among other things, also forms of direct participation at the work place, neighborhood assemblies, and public deliberation fora.

& Zirakzadeh 1992). First, advocates contend that political decisions should have maximal legitimacy, and that the highest degree of legitimacy can be attained with direct, unmediated votes of the people. Second, referendums are often seen as a means to hold representatives accountable (Setälä 1999). Referendums enable the people to veto decisions made by elites and thus constitute a check on the government; further, they make backdoor deals more difficult and thus increase transparency. Finally, advocates contend that referendums have an educative effect. Referendums are argued to bring government closer to the people and engage citizens directly, thus empowering and educating the citizens, raising popular trust and interest in politics, and increasing political participation. Some go as far as arguing that direct democracy makes citizens freer (Qvortrup 1999*a*) or that referendums are necessary for humans to maximize their potentials (Butler & Ranney 1978*a*).[2]

That said, many scholars also remain deeply skeptical of referendums. In the tradition of Madison (Hamilton, Madison & Jay 2014 [1787]), Mill (1958 [1861]), and more recent thinkers including Schumpeter (1960 [1942]), Schattschneider (1988 [1960]), and Sartori (1987), they argue that only representative democracy can fulfil the promise of democratic government. The central argument against direct democracy, according to many critics, is that ordinary citizens lack the intellectual capabilities to make wise policy decisions. According to this view, only elected elites have the necessary expertise to deal with complex and often technical political issues. Delegating policy decisions to ordinary citizens is thus seen as a road to disaster. Other referendum opponents come to a similar conclusion, though based on somewhat less denigrating assumptions. These latter scholars concede that direct democracy may have been a workable solution for the ancient Greeks, where polities were small enough so that all citizens could meet face-to-face and where citizens could devote their full energies to political debates, not least given that slaves liberated citizens from labor. However, they see direct democracy as an unattainable dream in today's large polities, where citizens can no longer meet on a face-to-face basis and have too little time to spend on politics, not least given the abolition of slavery. According to this view, only a system whereby representatives are paid and given sufficient time to consider issues in direct contact to each other while simultaneously being held accountable

[2] Advocates of referendums see several additional attractive features in referendums, including that they provide a more accurate expression of the popular will than elections and that referendums weaken the power of special interests. For reviews and discussions see Butler & Ranney (1978*a*), Butler & Ranney (1994*b*), and Lupia & Matsusaka (2004).

by regular elections constitutes a realistic implementation of the ideal of democracy (Butler & Ranney 1994*b*).

Several additional arguments have been made against referendums (for overviews see Butler & Ranney 1978*a*, Butler & Ranney 1994*b*, Rourke, Hiskes & Zirakzadeh 1992, Tierney 2012). Many referendum critics contend that while referendums promise popular power and increased accountability, they are in effect easily manipulated to serve the selfish interests of political leaders (Tierney 2012, Walker 2003). Referendums are often designed by political elites; that is, it is often elites that determine the issue of the vote, the timing, the referendum question, the decision rule, etc. This, it is argued, allows political leaders to control referendums and launch them only when they are certain of victory. Thus, rather than checking representatives and improving accountability, critics contend that the referendum in reality constitutes a means for elites to consolidate their own power. In Lijphart's (1984, p. 203) famous words: "most referendums are both controlled and pro-hegemonic."

Second, critics often hold that referendums fail to measure the intensity of beliefs, prevent logrolling, and, ultimately, hinder the search for consensus solutions. Referendums, it is argued, tend to oversimplify issues by artificially separating them into simple yes-or-no decisions. Referendums are also argued to fail to consider the interconnectedness of political issues as they do not allow for quid pro quo solutions. Thus, referendums render difficult the search for a consensus solution on which all can agree. Further, the numerical majority always wins in referendums, even if a minority feels very strongly about an issue. A measure may have the lukewarm support of a majority of voters but be strongly opposed by a minority. Because all votes count the same in referendums, the majority's unenthusiastic support for the measure always carries the vote. Only face-to-face debates in representative institutions are argued to enable compromise solutions that respect strongly held beliefs by minorities (Butler & Ranney 1978*a*, Haskell 2000, Tierney 2012).

Third, a related criticism is that referendums will lead to a tyranny of the majority. Referendums are often decided by a simple 50% plus 1 majority. Thus, referendums enable the majority to decide in its own interest, which may run counter to minority rights. By contrast, representative government facilitates compromise solutions that consider the interests of minorities (see above), and at the same time offers safeguards in the form of checks and balances on the power of the majority, such as judicial review (Gamble 1997, Haskell 2000). Referendums are thus often described as the ultimate expression of majoritarian democracy. Barry (1975, p.

485), for example, argued that direct democracy constitutes the "antithesis" of consociational democracy.

Finally, many critics of referendums believe that the educative effect hoped for by advocates of referendums is illusive. Rather than engaging citizens, referendums are argued to overburden citizens with complex and lengthy ballots. Thus, it is argued that referendum proponents expect too much from citizens and that referendums will decrease political interest and efficacy, and ultimately discourage rather than encourage political participation (Bowler & Donovan 1998).[3]

In sum, then, advocates of direct democracy associate referendums with several attractive features, whereas opponents have levelled a series of criticisms. Advocates of referendums sometimes write off the opponents' case against referendums as driven by an undemocratic ideology. Bogdanor (1981*b*, p. 189), for example, argues that "in the last resort, the arguments against the referendum are also arguments against democracy." To a certain point, this argument has validity. In particular, the notion that citizens are not capable of making informed decisions on policy issues and should therefore not be allowed to take part in referendums comes close to Plato's (1974) outright rejection of democracy due to it undermining the expertise needed for good government. Why should citizens be capable of making good decisions in elections but not in referendums? Nevertheless, advocates of direct democracy are often too quick to write off the case against referendums. The referendum critics have pointed to several actual or potential problems associated with referendums that should not be taken lightheartedly.

2.2.2 Empirical Literature

Luckily, we are increasingly in a better position to judge the merits and drawbacks that come with referendums. The increased practice of referendums in the past few decades has led to an explosion in scholarly interest in direct democracy. Thus, many of the arguments made for and against referendums can now be judged from an empirical perspective. In the following few paragraphs I will highlight some of the most important findings that have emerged from empirical referendum research. I do not aspire to give a comprehensive overview. The literature

[3]The referendum skeptics have made a number of additional arguments against direct democracy, including that referendums (contrary to the claim by advocates) increase the power of special interests (Broder 2000, Cronin 1999, Magleby 1984, for an overview of existing evidence see Lupia & Matsusaka 2004), that referendums lead to cycling decisions (Riker 1982, Sartori 1987, McLean 1989, for discussions see Budge 1996 and Setälä 1999), and that referendums weaken representative institutions by eroding the power and popular respect of representatives (see Butler & Ranney 1978*a*, Budge 1996, Altman 2011), a claim that notably directly contradicts the claim made by other referendum skeptics that most referendums are controlled by elites and pro-hegemonic.

is vast and impossible to review in a few paragraphs. Still, even this limited treatment is sufficient to demonstrate a fundamental point: referendums are neither unambiguously bad nor unambiguously good.

Existing empirical research ranges from largely descriptive assessments of the practice of referendums (e.g. Auer & Bützer 2001, Butler & Ranney 1978*b*, Butler & Ranney 1994*c*, Gallagher & Uleri 1996, LeDuc 2003, Suksi 1993, Qvortrup 2014*c*) over more systematic studies of single cases and case comparisons (e.g. Qvortrup 2005, Rourke, Hiskes & Zirakzadeh 1992, Wheatley & Mendez 2013) to survey research (e.g. Kriesi 2005, Lupia 1994), experimental research (e.g. Esaiasson, Gilljam & Persson 2012, Lupia & McCubbins 1998), and macro-level large-N analyses (e.g. Bochsler & Hug 2015, Lewis 2013, Smith 2001). The range of questions addressed is also broad. While some of the more grandiose arguments for and against referendums are difficult to test (such as that referendums maximize human potential), many can be framed as scientific propositions that lend themselves well to empirical testing. I will first look at some of the evidence regarding the arguments against referendums, and then turn to the evidence concerning the arguments made in their favor.

As argued, (the lack of) voter competence is often considered the central argument against referendums. However, against this contention, a number of studies now exist suggesting that citizens tend to be far more sophisticated in making policy decisions than the critics allege (Bowler & Donovan 1998, Kriesi 2005, Lupia 1994, Lupia & McCubbins 1998). This is not to say that all citizens engage in detailed analyses of referendum proposals—though a surprisingly high number of citizens appear notably to do exactly that, at least in Switzerland (Kriesi 2005). It is also not to say that all voters have very high levels of political sophistication. Survey after survey demonstrates that substantial segments of the electorate cannot even answer the most basic political questions (Delli Carpini & Keeter 1996). However, many citizens make effective use of information shortcuts (heuristics), such as party or interest group endorsements, to arrive at quick decisions that nonetheless make sense in terms of their underlying values and interests. That is, heuristics allow citizens to cast votes that align with their preferences, even if they have less than perfect information about the specific content of ballot proposals. Of course, citizens relying on information shortcuts is a long way from the idealistic picture of engaged and sophisticated citizens deliberating political issues. Nevertheless, evidence builds up that claims that voters are (plainly speaking) too dumb to vote in referendums belong in the realm of polemic.

That voters make choices in line with their preferences does not, of course, mean that they also make good choices. As stated, another core concern with referendums has been that they celebrate majoritarianism and threaten the rights of minorities. A number of studies now exist that underline this fear. Gamble (1997), for example, finds that American voters are significantly more likely to endorse ballot measures that are targeted against minorities compared to referendums on other issues. Lewis (2013) finds that American states with provisions for referendums were more likely than other states to enact same-sex marriage bans, affirmative action bans, and to instate English as the only official language (also see Matsusaka 2010, Nicholson-Crotty 2006). Negative effects were also found for religious minority rights (Christmann 2010, Christmann & Danaci 2012) and citizenship rights (Bolliger 2004, Hainmueller & Hangartner 2013, Helbling & Kriesi 2004) in Switzerland (though see Frey & Goette 1998).

In line with the fears of critics, existing evidence thus suggests that direct democracy can endanger minorities. However, existing studies at the same time also suggest that referendums are not equally problematic for all minorities and under all circumstances. First, whether or not referendums have the potential to negatively affect minorities depends on the type of minority. Those minorities that are seen favorably by the majority have little to fear (and may even profit from referendums) (Bochsler & Hug 2015, Vatter & Danaci 2010). While the same does not always apply to less well-integrated minorities, it should be added that direct democracy as practiced in modern states does not replace but supplements institutions of representative democracy (Gallagher 1996). Strong judicial review can accordingly be used to offset direct democracy's negative effects on minorities (Christmann 2012). Furthermore, existing evidence also suggests that under certain circumstances, minorities may even profit from referendums. Vatter (2000) argues that whereas some types of referendums are strongly majoritarian (e.g. government-initiated referendums without quorums), others have more consensual features (e.g. citizen-initiated referendums with high quorums). Similarly, Neidhart (1970) argues that provisions for citizen-initiated referendums that can be used to veto legislation increase chances for power-sharing at the elite level. Finally, minorities can profit if they have the opportunity to launch citizen's initiatives as this may raise attention to their case (Höglinger 2008, Kirchgässner 2010).

A third major argument against referendums that has undergone significant empirical scrutiny is the claim that referendums are (almost) always controlled and pro-hegemonic. Again, existing research suggests a nuanced answer. For one, referendums clearly have the potential to

be exploited by elites to advance their own political interests. The clearest examples emerge in dictatorships, where referendums are often called in a manipulative way with the aim of creating a veil of popular approval for authoritarian policies (Altman 2011).[4] But then it should not be surprising that referendums are used as instruments of dictatorship in dictatorships. In democracies, the picture looks less bleak. Surely, one can also find manipulative referendums in democracies. In particular, it is often argued that this applies to referendums that are initiated by governments in an ad hoc fashion. Ad hoc initiation allows elites to exercise strong control over the process (Smith 1976). Morel (2007), for example, argues that several French referendums in effect constituted attempts by consecutive presidents to increase their own power. However, only a minority of referendums in democratic regimes are initiated by governments (Altman 2011, Qvortrup 2000). Further, at least in democracies, government-initiated referendums are far from always a mean for power consolidation (Gallagher 1996). Morel (2001, 2007), for example, identifies a number of more 'genuine' motives for elites to call ad hoc referendums, including the addition of legitimacy to controversial policies and the resolution of moral issues that cut across party lines. And, even if elites intend to exploit referendums for personal gain, this can be difficult because referendum campaigns are difficult to control and predict in democracies (Smith 1976, LeDuc 2002). Even in the case of government-initiated referendums, it is therefore not uncommon that they come out against the wishes of the initiators (at least in democracies) (Morel 2007). Against Lijphart, it is thus not true that most referendums are both controlled and pro-hegemonic.

Thus far we have looked at the empirical evidence concerning the arguments against referendums. Analogously, several of the claims made by referendum proponents have been scrutinized. Once more, the picture that emerges is one of nuance. For one, recent experimental work indeed suggests that citizens see decisions as more legitimate if they participate directly in the decision-making process (Esaiasson, Gilljam & Persson 2012), as contended by referendum proponents. However, the evidence concerning the argument that referendums increase the accountability and responsiveness of political elites to citizen demands is more mixed. Under certain circumstances, referendums may indeed increase the congruence between the median voter position

[4] In fact, referendums in authoritarian states have very rarely come out against the wishes of their leaders (Butler & Ranney 1994*a*). Among the few exceptions range the 1980 referendum in Uruguay, which ultimately contributed to the fall of the military regime in 1985, and the 1988 referendum in Chile, which led to the fall of the Pinochet regime (Altman 2011).

and policy outputs (Gerber 1996, Gerber & Hug 2001, Matsusaka 2004).[5] This applies especially if there are provisions for citizen-initiated referendums (Hug 2004, Altman 2011) and if there is a large discongruence between elite and citizen preferences (Leemann & Wasserfallen 2016). However, as noted elites sometimes also manage to exploit referendums to further their own causes, especially, but not only, in dictatorships. In some cases, wealthy businesses have also managed to sway the vote (Magleby 1984). Thus, referendums sometimes, but not always, increase vertical accountability.

Finally, mixed evidence has also been found regarding referendums' educative effect. In line with the hopes of referendum proponents, a number of studies indeed found that exposure to direct democracy promotes political efficacy (Bowler & Donovan 2002, Hero & Tolbert 2004, Kim 2015), stimulates political interest (Tolbert, McNeal & Smith 2003), increases political knowledge (Smith 2002*b*, Tolbert, McNeal & Smith 2003), and raises electoral turnout (Dyck & Seabrook 2010, Lacey 2005, Smith 2001, Tolbert, Grummel & Smith 2001, Tolbert, McNeal & Smith 2003, Tolbert & Smith 2005). However, these findings are not very robust (Dyck 2009, Everson 1981, Magleby 1984, Schlozman & Yohai 2008), and other studies suggest to the contrary that a too extensive use of referendums will negatively affect political participation (Altman 2013, Freitag & Stadelmann-Steffen 2010), probably due to voter fatigue. Further, the effect sizes tend to be small. Take the example of the effect of referendums on turnout. The most optimistic study yet published, at least to my knowledge, reports that turnout is up to 9 percentage points higher in American states with provisions for referendums compared to those without (Tolbert, Grummel & Smith 2001). While substantial, even a 9 percentage point increase can hardly be seen as evidence for the transformation of society hoped for by participatory democrats—less alone the effect sizes in the range of 1 to 4 percentage points reported in many other studies.

In short, the existing evidence suggests that referendums are neither unambiguously good or bad. Some of the starkest claims made by referendum opponents clearly belong in the realm of polemic. Voters do not generally lack the intellectual capacities to vote on policy issues; and referendums are also not always controlled and pro-hegemonic. Overall the existing evidence suggests that if adequately designed, and under the right conditions, referendums may make

[5]Note that this is not necessarily a good thing as the majority may wish to discriminate against minorities (see above).

a positive contribution to the working of democracy. For example, referendums are likely to increase the legitimacy of political decisions and may at least under some circumstances also increase accountability. But referendums are no panacea. They are unlikely to constitute the magic bullet against voter apathy and may also endanger minorities, though the latter is not insuperable and can, for example, be countered with adequate judicial review.

2.3 The Conflict Resolution Potential of Self-Determination Referendums

Having discussed the pros and cons of referendums from a general perspective, I now turn to the scholarly debate on the phenomenon of main interest here—SD referendums—and to the debate on their conflict resolution potential.[6] An initial observation to be made is that the debate on SD referendums in many ways mirrors the more general debate on the utility of referendums. That is, we again find enthusiastic supporters of SD referendums, but also many who reject such referendums. A crucial difference emerges as the arguments for and against referendums apply even more forcefully in the case of referendums that deal with fundamental constitutional questions, such as self-rule (Tierney 2009, p. 368). Thus, those with a positive view of referendums tend to see even more of a case for SD referendums. Given the importance of the stakes involved, many advocates contend that a question as important as determining the contours of the polity should not be left to elites (see Hamon 1995, Tierney 2009, Sen 2015). Major decisions need maximal and, thus, popular legitimacy. In the view of advocates, referendums will notably even promote peace, fundamentally as they provide moral and political legitimacy (Wood 1981, Frombgen 1999). Any form of decision-making other than referendums is seen as less legitimate, and thus more prone for violent contention (Farley 1986).

By contrast, those with a negative view of referendums tend to see even more of a case against referendums if they are to deal with self-rule, ultimately out of a belief that such referendums will promote rather than prevent violent conflict. The referendum skeptics often contend that the

[6] I include in this discussion treatments of several related types of referendums that have substantial overlap with the SD referendum as presently defined, including international plebiscites (a special type of SD referendum that deals with border delimitations between nation-states, see e.g. Wambaugh 1920, 1933), peace referendums (a special type of referendums held in the context of peace processes and often, but not always, include self-rule questions, see e.g. 2009, 2014, Collin 2015), and sovereignty or boundary referendums (a broader type of referendum that in addition to SD referendums includes referendums on things like national unifications or European integration, see e.g. He 2002, Laponce 2001, 2004, 2012, as well as chapter 4).

deficiencies associated with referendums have especially grave consequences if they are applied to fundamental constitutional questions, such as determining the contours of the polity. The critics argue that in the realm of ordinary legislative referendums, voters' limited capacity to make informed decisions is bad enough, but at least the resulting decisions will not usually be very consequential. However, as we enter the realm of major constitutional questions, the risk of mistakes becomes all the more serious; rash judgements by ordinary citizens may then quickly have deleterious consequences (Tierney 2009, p. 368). Given the high stakes involved, the critics also tend to see an even higher potential for referendums to be manipulated by elites to augment their own powers (e.g. Wheatley 2012). Presiding over a political entity constitutes the ultimate prize for political elites, and so they have plentiful incentives to manipulate referendums via their timing, the choice of demos, the ballot question, the decision rules, and misleading propaganda to influence votes in their favor (Rudrakumaran 1989). Further, the critics contend that problems related to referendums' majoritarian nature and inability to measure the strength of beliefs are intensified, given that SD referendums are often held in the context of profound ethnonational conflict. Reilly (2008, p. 237), for example, points to the stark choices offered in referendums on statehood, which will often have the effect of "heightening tensions, forcing both voters and politicians to adopt fixed positions and pushing rhetoric towards extreme positions." Mac Ginty (2003, p. 3) contends that one of the principle problems with SD referendums is that they are "zero sum, creating winners and losers", do not provide any incentive for the winners to take the views of the minority into account, and thus tend to "do little other than delimit and quantify division", often in the form of ethnic head counts. For Thomas Foley and Richard Scammon (cited in Ranney 1981, p. 163–164), the crucial pitfall of referendums in the context of separatism is that they cannot establish the intensity of beliefs. Speaking of a hypothetical referendum on independence in Puerto Rico, Scammon asks: "What do we do if the vote is 90 to 10 against independence but the independentistas have the bombs?" For the critics, the high stakes entailed in SD referendums, their excessive majoritarianism and inability to measure the intensity of beliefs, voters' inability to make cool judgements and the high potential for elites to manipulate referendums combine to a dangerous cocktail. Often, the losers will have no other options and come to view extraconstitutional avenues, including violence, as their only recourse (Mac Ginty 2003, Reilly 2008, Rudrakumaran 1989). Thus, the critics contend, the subtle and difficult problems associated with questions related to self-rule are better dealt with at the elite level.

Increasingly, though, the black-or-white picture painted by some of the most ardent supporters and critics of SD referendums is called into question. Ever more scholars espouse more moderate views, suggesting that SD referendums constitute indispensable tools in certain situations, but potentially dangerous tools in others. This is not to say that moderate claims regarding the dangers and benefits of SD referendums constitute an entirely new phenomenon. Already Wambaugh (1933), in her seminal treatment of the boundary plebiscites in the aftermath of World War One, argued that referendums dealing with territorial matters entail both the potential to reduce and inflame tensions, depending on the circumstances. However, perhaps echoing the nuanced findings of the empirical referendum research cited above, less polemic and more context-based arguments are increasingly taking hold. Critically, the turn towards moderation increasingly also affects notable critics of referendums. For example, the above-cited Roger Mac Ginty, Ben Reilly, and Jonathan Wheatley, while critical of SD referendums in general, all concede that they might also have beneficial consequences under certain, if in their view empirically rare, conditions. For example, in a recent paper Mac Ginty (together with Lee) argues that "[s]ome well-timed referendums have advanced peace processes at critical moments, but these are exceptions and we should be cautious in recommending them as exemplars to other cases" (Lee & Mac Ginty 2012, p. 43). Conversely, many of those who see SD referendums in a more positive light, and think of them as useful devices in general, increasingly recognize that such referendums might in some cases also be of little help, and possibly even dangerous (e.g. Bogdanor 1981*a*, Laponce 2001, Laponce 2004, Qvortrup 2014*a*).

The question, of course, becomes what these circumstances are that make SD referendums susceptible to peace or separatist armed conflict, respectively. While several different arguments have been made, one of the key arguments often put forth is that referendums need to be agreed between key stakeholders. Already Wambaugh (1933, p. 506) recommended that international plebiscites must be held under the agreement of the interested parties. In a similar vein, Bogdanor (1981*a*) contends that whereas agreed SD referendums have the potential to definitely settle an issue or, even if not settling an issue once and for all, can weaken the claim-making potential of the eventual losers and thus defuse an issue by isolating extremists, referendums that do not have prior agreement tend to be of little help. In the words of Bogdanor (1981*a*, p. 144), the referendum "cannot provide the will to agreement where none exists. [...] It can articulate a submerged consensus but cannot create one" (Bogdanor 1981*a*, p. 144). Gallagher (1996) makes a similar argument while stressing the 'demotic question,' that is, who is entitled to vote in an

SD referendum. According to Gallagher, the principal problem with referendums on territorial issues is that there is "usually a dispute about just who is entitled to self-determination." Thus, when it comes to referendums on self-rule, a fundamental issue often becomes who is allowed to partake in referendums. "Deciding whether "settlers" have the same referendum voting rights as "natives" (a major stumbling block in the long-awaited Western Sahara self-determination referendum), and whether small areas have the right to vote themselves out of larger entities [as several Yugoslav and Soviet republics did in the early 1990s], are usually fundamental to the problem." As the referendum cannot help in resolving such questions, Gallagher concludes that "a resolution of the problem must precede holding a referendum on agreed terms" (Gallagher 1996, p. 245). Tierney (2009, p. 380) makes a similar point, while adding that referendums held despite a lack of prior agreement on the demos will often exacerbate ethnic conflict (also see Tierney 2012, chapter 3). Another example of an argument going into a similar direction is Qvortrup (2014*a*, p. 66), who argues that referendums on secession are prone to exacerbate hostilities if they are not preceded by negotiations between the parties (also see Qvortrup 2005, p. 22). Similar arguments are also made by Collin (2015, p. 115), Goodhart (1981, esp. pp. 140–141)[7], He (2002, p. 91), Farley (1986, p. 51), Lee & Mac Ginty (2012, pp. 50–53), Loizides (2009, pp. 7–8, 16), Sen (2015, p. 39), and Wheatley (2012, esp. pp. 64–67)[8].

Several other factors have been argued to shape the likely implications of SD referendums for the prospect of peace, sometimes in addition to prior agreement on the rules, but sometimes also in isolation. Among these additional factors is the decision rule. Several authors have contended that problems related to the tyranny of the majority should be tackled with qualified majority requirements (e.g. He 2002, Hoffmann 1998). Laponce (2001, pp. 53–54), in contrast, is skeptical of qualified majority requirements. Instead, he proposes that referendums should be designed so that they maximize the "translation of votes into boundaries" and thus "popular satisfaction" (Laponce 2004, pp. 171–172). In other words, Laponce sees those voting procedures as particularly beneficial that will trap a minimal number of individuals under a regime that they do not want, and thus minimize the tyranny of the majority. Laponce points to two empirical examples that he considers quite successful in achieving this aim (while proposing a

[7]However, Goodhart (1981, p. 141) adds that it might be beneficial to lay down the rules for referendums well beforehand, "when emotional fires are banked."

[8]However, while seeing benefits in agreed SD referendums, Wheatley (2012, p. 72) judges them to be "very much the exception, rather than the rule."

series of modifications): the 1920 plebiscite in Schleswig, where voting occurred on a zone-by-zone basis (at least in the southern part of Schleswig); and the cascade of referendums that led to the creation of a new Jura canton in Switzerland in the 1970s, where the borders between the new Jura canton and the canton from which it separated, Bern, were determined in a series of ever-more local votes.

Another factor argued to matter is the timing of referendums. In two papers dealing with referendums held during peace processes, Loizides (2009, 2014) makes the case for what he calls 'mandate referendums'—referendums that are deployed early in peace processes with the aim of giving the leader a negotiation mandate. Loizides sees several advantages in mandate referendums, including that they prepare communities for negotiations and that they can give leaders a freer hand to make painful concessions. Further, Loizides argues that mandate referendums can be lost without sacrificing the peace process. By contrast, he sees referendums on finalized peace deals as a risky enterprise that may well jeopardize the results of difficult negotiations.[9] Collin (2015) makes a similar argument, as does Reilly (2008), though Reilly goes much further in his rejection of referendums on final peace deals by suggesting that these "clearly [constitute] the most damaging form of democratic legitimation" (p. 236). That said, Sen (2015, pp. 39–40) makes exactly the opposite point, warning of "hasty" referendums conducted in the initial phase of peace processes on the grounds that referendums are dangerous if not all important issues have previously been resolved via elite negotiations.

A number of additional factors have been proposed. Several authors warn of the dangers associated with manipulated or rigged votes, suggesting that fraudulent referendums will only magnify political conflicts (He 2002, Farley 1986, Laponce 2001, Wambaugh 1933). Thus, Wambaugh (1933) argues that the local administration in referendum areas should be neutralized and troops withdrawn (also see Farley 1986). In a similar vein, Laponce (2001, pp. 49–50) argues that international election observers are beneficial as they can ensure the fairness of vote counting and electoral administration more generally. Qvortrup (2014*a*, pp. 66-68) adds that international support in the form of mediation can be crucial in reaching the consensus necessary to perform a successful referendum.

Furthermore, it is sometimes suggested that giving outsiders a vote in SD referendums—

[9]It is worth adding that mandate referendums can be seen as problematic from the perspective of democratic theory, given that voters are by definition in the dark as to what exactly they are voting on. Mandate referendums also appear rather close to the widely criticized personalized plebiscites.

those citizens that do not reside in the region affected by the sovereignty change at stake—may aggravate tensions (He 2002, pp. 92-93). Lee & Mac Ginty (2012), on the other hand, have argued that referendums can only be successful in fostering peace if they are accompanied by robust and neutral voter education campaigns and conducted in contexts that are free of ethnic (or other) antagonism. It has also been argued that SD referendums' effect on violent conflict depends on the prevalence of civic or ethnic conceptions of nationalism, with referendums constituting benign tools where civic nationalism dominates, but dangerous tools where ethnic nationalism is prevalent (Qvortrup 1999*b*). And, finally, Tierney (2009, 2012) argues that the potential of constitutional referendums to foster peace depends on the extent to which they facilitate micro- and macro-level deliberative processes (also see Stephens 2015).

2.4 Weaknesses of the Existing Literature

Having discussed the existing literature on the conflict resolution potential of SD referendums, I now turn to a discussion of several important weaknesses in this literature. I begin by noting a number of theoretical ambiguities and then turn to the gravest weakness, namely the almost complete lack of systematic empirical testing.

2.4.1 Theoretical Ambiguities

Several theoretical ambiguities can be made out in the existing literature on the nexus between SD referendums and separatist armed conflict. First, existing theoretical accounts tend to pay very limited attention to the origins of SD referendums and, as a result of this, the endogeneity of SD referendums to separatist armed conflict. Second, little consideration has generally been paid to the nature of the causal mechanisms linking SD referendums to separatist armed conflict. And third, while one of the key arguments made in the literature (on which I will build in the next chapter), the exact meaning of prior agreement on the referendum has tended to remain underspecified. I discuss each in turn.

Endogeneity

SD referendums are the result of specific circumstances, of specific actions and interactions between political actors. However, existing theoretical statements have tended to blanket the reasons why SD referendums emerge, and thus effectively treated SD referendums as if they

occurred in a political vacuum. As a result, theories have often remained somewhat sketchy and underspecified. Who are the relevant actors? What are their interests? Who initiates SD referendums, when, and how? What is the strategic decision-making behind SD referendums? Under what circumstances will SD referendums be agreed by the key stakeholders, and when not? When will 'outsiders' be included in SD referendums, and when will neutral election observers be allowed? Most existing accounts provide few answers (for two partial exceptions see Loizides 2014, Wheatley 2012).

While the limited attention paid to the origins of SD referendums has been detrimental to theoretical clarity, the most important implication has been that existing theories have tended to overlook a crucial aspect: the high extent to which SD referendums are endogenous to the risk of separatist armed conflict. Factors such as prior agreement on the referendum principle, fair decision rules, and whether referendums are supervised by neutral international election observers may well all matter for whether SD referendums promote or inhibit peace. However, whether or not referendums are agreed, whether or not they employ fair decision rules, and whether there are neutral international observers is clearly not independent of the outlook for peace. Agreed and fair SD referendums with neutral international observers are likely to emerge in situations where the parties involved in referendums have a willingness to cooperate. Conversely, unilateral, referendums with unfair decision rules, and referendums without international election observers are likely to emerge where actors have intransigent positions and no willingness to make compromises. By implication, different types of SD referendums are likely to emerge under situations with systematically varied ex-ante risks of separatist armed conflict. The cooperation necessary for agreed, fair, and supervised SD referendums is only likely to emerge in situations where peace is likely *independently of the referendum*, and vice versa. This has important ramifications for causal identification. There are likely to be many background factors at play that affect whether SD referendums are agreed or not, employ fair decision rules, and whether or not there is neutral election monitoring. At the same time, these factors are also likely to affect future chances for peace. Thus, identifying the independent effect of referendums on self-rule constitutes a significant challenge. The limited attention paid to the actors involved in referendums, their interests and interactions, and the reasons why they decided on a referendum has helped to obscure this important insight.

Causal Mechanisms

The second weakness in the existing literature is the casual way in which SD referendums are often linked to violent or nonviolent outcomes (for notable exceptions see Bogdanor 1981*a*, Collin 2015, Loizides 2009, Loizides 2014). The literature is afloat in loose statements, such as that referendums may sometimes lead to violence because they "expose the fault-lines between groups" (Tierney 2012, p. 96) or because they "constitute a critical junction in a downward spiral towards civil war" (Wheatley 2012, p. 65). Conversely, SD referendums are often held to reduce the risk of violence for opaque reasons such as that they "facilitate peaceful transitions" (Qvortrup 2014*a*, p. 60) or that they strengthen "political legitimation" (Farley 1986, p. 20), often without much further discussion of the reasons why SD referendums should contribute to conflict resolution. To get to a better understanding of the effect of SD referendums on separatist armed conflict, more consideration is needed of the causal mechanisms linking SD referendums to violent or nonviolent outcomes.

The Meaning of Agreement

The third and final theoretical weakness concerns the loose way in which existing scholarship has tended to define the meaning of agreement on the referendum. As argued, many scholars have argued that prior agreement on the referendum constitutes the key condition shaping SD referendums' conflict resolution potential. However, significant ambiguity tends to surround the exact meaning of agreement. Typically, only loose statements are made, such as that referendums need to be held under "agreed terms" (Gallagher 1996, p. 245) or that prior agreement must be sought between "the main political players" (He 2002, p. 91). Who it is exactly that needs to agree often remains opaque. Further, the circumstances under which one can speak of agreement on a referendum are rarely specified in detail. Does agreement on a referendum require a negotiated settlement, such as the Edinburgh Agreement that led to the Scottish independence referendum in 2014 (Casanas Adam 2014), or the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that led to the 2011 independence referendum in South Sudan (Medani 2011)? Can it be sufficient that referendums are called in line with established constitutional routines? The existing literature provides few hints, but clear statements are needed to operationalize the theoretical argument and thus, ultimately, to learn about the role of prior agreement for the conflict resolution potential of SD referendums.

2.4.2 Lack of Systematic Empirical Testing

I now turn to the fourth and gravest weakness in the existing literature: the nearly complete lack of systematic empirical testing. As it stands, theoretical claims about the conflict resolution potential of SD referendums (or lack thereof) have almost invariably been evaluated on the basis of a small number of handpicked empirical cases. Very limited attention tends to be paid to case selection; hence, it often remains unclear why these and not other cases should be taken as evidence for patterns across the larger population of SD referendums. Further, attention usually goes only to the most well-known examples. Thus, scholars who highlight benign consequences of SD referendums typically refer to well-known cases such as the 1920 referendum Schleswig on border delimitation between Denmark and Germany (e.g. Bogdanor 1981*a*, Laponce 2001, Laponce 2004), the series of referendums in the 1970s on the Jura question (e.g. Buechi 2012, Laponce 2001, Laponce 2004), or the 1998 referendum on Northern Ireland's Belfast Agreement (e.g. Tierney 2009, Tierney 2012). Conversely, authors who stress the pitfalls of SD referendums usually point to the independence referendums held in the early 1990s in Bosnia, Croatia, and Slovenia (e.g. Mac Ginty 2003, Wheatley 2012) or to the 1999 referendum on the independence of East Timor (e.g. Reilly 2008, Mac Ginty 2003).

The general focus on a small number of handpicked empirical cases in the extant literature becomes even more problematic when considering that several of the factors argued to matter for SD referendums' conflict resolution potential are likely to be highly endogenous to separatist armed conflict (see above). Peace may well have prevailed in a case such as Schleswig if borders had been redrawn using a different method, or even if borders had not been redrawn at all. Conversely, the situation in the Yugoslavia of the early 1990s was clearly fragile, and violence may well have emerged without the referendums. Given the endogenous nature of SD referendums, judging their contributions to peaceful or violent outcomes is difficult even with the most advanced research designs; judging them by looking at a small number of handpicked cases without consideration for counterfactual outcomes is all the more difficult.

The limited attention paid to systematic empirical testing may be considered surprising, given contrary developments in two related fields. As shown above, a wave of empirical studies conducted in the past three decades has led to a reassessment of many of the most optimistic arguments for, but also many of the most pessimistic arguments against referendums. On the other hand, an even bigger wave of empirically-oriented research conducted in the past three decades has aimed to explore the reasons behind intrastate armed conflicts, including separatist

armed conflicts (for excellent reviews see Blattmann & Miguel 2010, Kalyvas 2007). In particular, extensive treatment has been given to the relationship between (indirect) democracy and civil war (Cederman, Hug & Krebs 2010, Hegre, Ellingsen, Gates & Gleditsch 2001, Mansfield & Snyder 2007) and how (indirect) democracy's prime mechanism, elections, incentivizes or disincentivizes the use of violence (Cederman, Gleditsch & Hug 2013, Cheibub & Hays 2015, Collier 2009, Hafner-Burton, Hyde & Jablonski 2014, Kuhn 2015). However, there has not been a similar push to gauge the empirical nexus between the primary mechanism of direct democracy—the referendum—and intrastate armed conflict, and in particular not regarding the effects of SD referendums on separatist armed conflict.

Thus, what is needed are carefully crafted, broad-based comparative studies evaluating the implications of SD referendums for the prospects of peace and violent conflict that explicitly take the endogeneity of SD referendums into account. While such studies are almost entirely absent from the field, a first step in this direction has recently been undertaken by Matt Qvortrup in his 2014 book on ethnonational referendums, a category of referendums that includes SD referendums, but also other types of referendums such as referendums on non-territorial power-sharing constitutions and national unifications. While Qvortrup's principle concern is with explaining the occurrence of different types of ethnonational referendums[10] rather than their relationship with separatist armed conflict, he also devotes some efforts to the latter question and presents what is, to the best of my knowledge, the first statistical analysis in this field. Specifically, in a chapter dedicated to secession referendums, Qvortrup (2014*a*, pp. 60–67) looks at the relationship between referendums on secession and civil war, comparing the frequency of civil war incidence in the wake several dozens attempts at secession, some of which involved a referendum and others not. Controlling for whether there were prior negotiations and ethnic fractionalization, Qvortrup finds that civil wars are less likely if a secession attempt involved a referendum.[11]

However, while a step in the right direction, Qvortrup's analysis has several weaknesses. First, Qvortrup's conclusions rest on a small and possibly biased sample of 58 secession refer-

[10]Chapter 6 deals with the factors that explain occurrences of SD referendums and includes some comments on Qvortrup's main findings and methodology.

[11]The effect is statistically significant, yet only at the 10% level (Qvortrup 2014*a*, Table 9 on p. 65). In addition to prior negotiations and ethnic fractionalization, Qvortrup controls for the 'yes vote'. However, it is unclear how Qvortrup coded the variable for cases that did not involve a referendum, and the variable is also not statistically significant.

endums (see p. 62 in Qvortrup 2014). While Qvortrup claims that these are all instances of secession referendums that have occurred in the period he considers (1900–2011), the improved data that will be introduced in chapter 4 identifies more than 160 referendums involving the question of secession during the same time span. The omissions include several well-known cases, including Kosovo's 1991 independence referendum, the 1993 independence referendum in Eritrea, and the 1999 independence referendum in East Timor, and many less well-known cases, such as the 1951 independence referendum in Nagaland (see Table 8 on pp. 63–64 in Qvortrup 2014). Second, while Qvortrup claims to cover all secession attempts between 1900 and 2011, this claim is highly questionable. Already a casual glance at Qvortrup's data suggests that he misses several important cases, and not only cases that involved a referendum. Examples of omitted cases without referendums include the secessionist conflicts over Kashmir and Aceh. An alternative existing dataset has identified as many as 250 secession movements while looking at a similar time span (Coggins 2011), whereas the newly collected SDM-Eurasia dataset that will be used in this study identifies a total of 123 groups in Europe and Asia alone that have made a claim to secession at some point since the end of World War Two (see chapter 5).

Third, controlling for ethnic fractionalization and prior negotiations is likely to be insufficient to remove selection bias. Thus, it is doubtful whether Qvortrup's empirical strategy eliminates the possibility of bias due to the endogeneity of SD referendums to separatist armed conflict. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, while it is increasingly argued in the literature that the effects of SD referendums are likely to depend on factors such as prior agreement, the fairness of the decision rules, or the timing of referendums in peace processes, Qvortrup evaluates the aggregate (average) effect of secession referendums without considering potential differences emerging due to conditional effects. This is all the more surprising as Qvortrup himself argues that the effect of secession referendums is likely to be conditional on prior negotiations and international support (see above and p. 66 in Qvortrup 2014). Thus, we continue to lack systematic empirical evidence whether secession referendums are conducive to peace only under some circumstances, but increase the threat of violence under others, as argued by an increasing share of the theoretical literature. The same, naturally, applies to referendums on internal self-rule (autonomy), given that these are not considered by Qvortrup at all.

2.5 Summary

This chapter began with a discussion of the extant debate on the utility of referendums. As has become clear, referendums are controversial. Many democratic theorists see referendums as deeply problematic for reasons including citizens' alleged insufficient intellectual capabilities to make wise policy decisions, the potential for referendums to be manipulated, and that referendums raise the danger of the tyranny of the majority. In contrast, other important theorists have cast referendums as the ideal form of democratic government, an opinion that notably is supported by a majority of citizens in many countries around the world. Against the black-or-white pictures painted by many supporters and foes of referendums, we have though seen that more nuanced voices have increasingly come to dominate the academic debate. The proliferation of referendums over the past century has led to a flurry of empirically oriented studies, and the evidence is amassing that referendums are neither as bad as some skeptics suggest nor always meet the high expectations of some supporters. In particular, we now have good evidence that citizens make far more sophisticated choices in referendums than their critics have alleged; that the majority of referendums, at least in democracies, do not constitute empty exercises that are exploited by elites for power consolidation; that referendums, at least under some circumstances, tend to increase vertical accountability; and that citizens tend to see decisions reached by referendum as more legitimate. However, we now also have good evidence that referendums may, in the absence of adequate countermeasures including judicial review, threaten the rights of minorities, and they are also unlikely to transform society to the extent hoped for by advocates.

In a next step, we turned our attention to the narrower debate of most interest here, namely the debate on SD referendums and their conflict resolution potential. We have seen that SD referendums represent an even more controversial topic; many of the arguments for and against referendums apply even more forcefully when it comes to referendums on major constitutional questions, such as self-rule, and while some thus see SD referendums as the best possible means to resolve disputes over self-rule, others raise strong notes of caution, ultimately out of a belief that they are more likely to promote than to prevent violent conflict. Again, though, we have observed a trend towards more nuanced arguments, with an increasing share of scholars arguing that SD referendums are neither unambiguously good or bad, and that while they may make a positive contribution towards peace under some conditions, they may represent

rather dangerous vehicles under other conditions. However, no consensus exists among these latter scholars regarding the nature of the conditions under which SD referendums represent apt mechanisms for conflict resolution. One of they key arguments proposed has been that SD referendums need to be agreed between key stakeholders, but several other factors have been proposed, including several proposals regarding the best timing of SD referendums in peace processes and the best decision rule, but also that SD referendums should have the support of the international community or that they need to provide space for deliberation.

Finally, several weaknesses were identified in the existing literature on the conflict resolution potential of SD referendums. The lack of systematic empirical tests was made out as the core problem; to date, almost all of the existing evidence on the relationship between SD referendums and separatist armed conflict is based on a small number of well-known cases, and very little attention tends to be paid to the endogeneity of SD referendums to conflict processes. In the light of the varied theoretical positions that have been taken regarding the advisability of SD referendums, but also the central role that SD referendums have increasingly come to play in the context of SD disputes, and will likely play in the future, the very limited empirically substantiated knowledge we still have about the conflict resolution potential of SD referendums is troubling, and constitutes an important motivation for the present study. However, while the gravest, the lack of systematic empirical evidence is not the only weakness that can be made out in the existing literature. In addition, we have observed several theoretical weaknesses. First, existing theories have tended to blanket the origins of SD referendums and, as a consequence, failed to theorize the endogeneity of SD referendums to conflict processes. Second, the causal mechanisms linking SD referendums to violent or nonviolent outcomes have often remained opaque. And finally, the concept of agreement on the referendum has remained underspecified. With this, it is now time to turn to my own theory-building efforts, where I will re-emphasize the central importance of agreement on the terms of SD referendums for their conflict resolution potential while addressing the mentioned theoretical ambiguities.

Chapter 3

Theory

3.1 Introduction

Do SD referendums contribute to peaceful conflict resolution? Or do they promote separatist armed conflict? This chapter introduces a novel theoretical framework arguing that they can do both, depending on whether SD referendums occur under agreed terms. As shown in chapter 2, this argument is not new, but I clarify and extend it in several ways. In departure to many existing accounts, the meaning of agreement on the terms of SD referendums is laid down in detail. Further, significant attention will be paid to the origins of SD referendums; the motivations for agreed and not agreed (unilateral) SD referendums, and the circumstances under which they are likely to occur. Crucially, this will frame in theoretical terms the main challenge we confront in later chapters, when the focus shifts to the empirical assessment of the nexus between SD referendums and separatist armed conflict: the endogeneity of agreed and unilateral SD referendums to conflict processes. Finally, while following others in arguing that agreed SD referendums are overall beneficial while unilateral SD referendums will often increase the risk of separatist armed conflict, detailed consideration will be given to the causal mechanisms linking agreed and unilateral SD referendums to differential conflict outcomes.

The theoretical discussion begins with a short discussion of the context in which SD referendums play out: disputes over self-determination. This will serve as an important backdrop for the discussion that follows, as it will identify the key actors involved in SD referendums, their interests, and their general forms of interaction. Before proceeding, it is though worth noting that while I focus on a single condition shaping SD referendums' consequences for conflict outcomes—agreement on the referendum—this does not mean that there may not be additional

relevant factors. As we have seen, a number of other factors have been argued to matter for SD referendums' conflict resolution potential, including the decision rule, the timing of referendums in peace processes, international support, and the extent to which referendums provide space for deliberation. However, following others (e.g. Gallagher 1996, He 2002, Wambaugh 1933) I believe that agreement on the referendum constitutes the key condition shaping SD referendums' conflict resolution potential. Other factors may also matter, but they are only likely to matter in conjunction with prior agreement. Their effects are also likely to be much smaller. The present focus on agreement on the referendum thus constitutes a natural starting point to address the theoretical and empirical weaknesses in the existing literature.

3.2 The Politics of Self-Determination: Actors, Interests, and Interactions

SD referendums (as well the outcome of interest in this study, separatist armed conflict) play out in the context of self-determination disputes.[1] SD disputes revolve around disagreement between societal groups with a claim to increased self-rule and their host state over the status of the group within the state. The societal groups who make claims for increased self-rule can be framed in ethnic terms. Most groups making SD claims can be defined based on standard ethnic markers, including color, language, or religion. Examples include the (black and Christian) Southerners in Sudan and the (German-speaking) South Tyroleans in Italy. Some other SD groups are mainly regionally defined, which following an inclusive understanding of ethnicity may also be considered ethnic groups (see e.g. Chandra 2006, Horowitz 1985).[2] A well-known historic example of a regionally defined SD group are the Southerners in the US. I here follow such a wide understanding of ethnicity that includes regional identities.

SD disputes involve two key actors: self-determination movements (SDMs) and states. I discuss each in turn.

[1] While this is a matter of definition for separatist armed conflict, SD referendums may in theory also occur outside the context of SD disputes. States could, for example, ask one or more of their regions whether or not they want to get more autonomy even in the absence of a self-rule challenger. In practice, this is unlikely to happen, because as argued below states generally want to retain as much authority at the center as possible. Thus, states have few incentives to call an SD referendum in the absence of societal pressure for self-rule.

[2] Ethnicity constitutes an elusive concept that has proven difficult to exactly pin down. No scholarly consensus exists on which groups should or should not count as an ethnic group (Chandra 2006). In particular, while some include regional groups (as noted), others do not (e.g. Cederman, Gleditsch & Buhaug 2013).

SDMs are sets of at least one but potentially many more political organizations, such as political parties, cultural organizations, or armed groups, that claim increased self-rule for a given, ethnically defined identity group (Sambanis, Germann & Schädel 2016). However, while all SDMs seek greater self-rule, the extent of self-rule they seek varies. Some SDMs are primarily interested in internal autonomy, such as the Jurassian movement in Switzerland or various indigenous groupings in the Americas. Other SDMs want to break away completely from their host state and establish an independent state of their own (such as the Croat movement in the former Yugoslavia), join another existing state (such as the Serb movement in Bosnia), or establish a new, pan-ethnic state composed of groups spread across multiple existing states (such as the various Kurdish groupings in the Middle East). Furthermore, it is important to note that whereas SDMs make claims on behalf of a given ethnic group, this does not mean that all members of the respective group must be in favor of increased self-rule. At the extreme, there are SDMs such as the Cornish movement in south-western England with clearly very limited public following and SDMs such as the historic Eritrean movement for independence which appear to have close to universal backing among their group. In-between, there are many groups that are seriously divided over self-rule questions, such as the Scots in the United Kingdom or the Catalans in Spain. Importantly as well, SDMs rarely constitute a monolithic block; often they are constituted by a variety of factions, some more moderate and others more radical, that differ in terms of the nature of their claims and their strategic and tactical preferences (Cunningham 2011, Cunningham 2014).

The second key player in SD disputes is the state. SD conflicts necessarily pit SDMs against the state because the state constitutes the legitimate holder of sovereignty (Philpott 2010). SDMs rely on the cooperation of the state because the state has what SDMs desire: sovereign authority. If the host state does not agree to give a group self-rule, the maximum SDMs can usually achieve is a form of de facto autonomy or independence. Transnistria constitutes a contemporary example. Unilateral secessions, whereby the international community recognizes a new state against the wishes of the host state, are rare. Kosovo constitutes one of the rare exceptions, even though it still lacks universal recognition. Crucially, some states have multiple layers of sovereign government, and SD claims made by SDMs can be targeted at both national and regional governments. The typical scenario is that SDMs challenge the central state; Quebecois secessionists, for example, want independence from Ottawa. However, in federal or decentralized countries, SDMs sometimes target their claims also against regional

governments. The Jurassians, for example, wanted to separate from the Swiss canton of Bern and create their own canton; thus Bern's regional government was mainly affected.[3]

States generally seek to avoid making concessions on self-rule, but some are more open towards accommodation than others.[4] Democracies, for example, are often seen as more responsive to minority claims (e.g. Gurr & Moore 1997, Gurr 2000*c*). States are also likely to be more flexible when it comes to granting regions autonomy rather than letting them secede. For example, many federal and decentralized states quite willingly share powers with regional governments. Nevertheless, as a general rule, state leaders seek to retain, if not increase, their power when pressed with self-rule claims (Cunningham 2013*a*, Cunningham 2014). This applies, in particular, with regard to secessions. States value their territorial integrity. States cannot exist without territory, so territory often has a high symbolic value to state leaders. Furthermore, land provides the state with tax revenue, a labor force, and mineral and other resources. Territory can also be vital for a state's physical survival, as more territory generally means more security from conquest or coercion. It has also been argued that states value even objectively worthless territory out of a fear of precedent-setting. Granting independence to one group may encourage other groups with more valuable territory to demand the same treatment (Toft 2003, 2012, Walter 2003, 2006*a*, 2006*b*, 2009). Thus, as Hechter (1992, p. 277) put it: "If there is one constant in history apart from the universality of death and taxes, it is the reluctance of states to part with territory."

However, states' responses to SD challenges does not only depend on their preferences. While generally reluctant to make concessions to self-rule challengers, states also seek to minimize the costs that can emerge from unresolved SD disputes (Cunningham 2014). Thus, whether or not states make concessions also depends on the severity of costs an SDM can impose on the state. Examples of how SDMs can impose costs on the state include violent attacks and nonviolent protest, but also the pressing of demands via conventional political channels, such as in parliaments (Cunningham 2013*b*). If the costs emanating from SD disputes rise to an

[3]While I use the term 'state' primarily for the national government, in federal or decentralized countries it may thus sometimes also refer to a regional government.

[4]Note that like SDMs, states are rarely unitary actors. States primarily act through their established institutions; typically this involves some sort of an executive, a legislature, and a judiciary. All three branches of government may be involved in decision-making, and they may or may not have the same preferences on how to deal with an SD challenger. Governments may also consist of multiple parties, or intraparty factions, with diverging preferences (Cunningham 2014).

unacceptable level, state leaders may relent and offer SDMs a measure of autonomy, or in some cases even allow a secession. The canton of Bern, for example, ultimately agreed to a separate Jura canton. Examples of agreed secessions include Norway (1905), Slovakia (1993), and Montenegro (2006).

Yet, given the high stakes involved in SD disputes, many states are quite willing to bear significant costs. Thus, while SDMs sometimes succeed in imposing sufficient costs on the state so that it relents, a quite common answer by states to self-rule challenges is repression. Repression can take many forms, ranging from discriminatory legislation over the harassment of dissidents, arrests, and bans of separatist parties to torture and mass killings (Davenport 2007). If the state employs violence against an SDM and the SDM responds in kind, or vice versa, separatist armed conflict emerges.

Finally, while states and SDMs constitute the two primary actors to SD disputes, it should be noted that these are not necessarily the only actors involved in them. In some cases, ethnic minorities within separatist regions that are opposed to separatism, and the organizations that represent them, play a crucial role. Well-known examples include the Serbian minorities in Croatia and Bosnia and the English minority in Quebec. Further, kin states may intervene on behalf of separatist groups (Brubaker 1996, Jenne 2007). Ireland, with its frequent interventions in the Northern Ireland conflict, constitutes an example. International organizations, such as the United Nations (UN), may intervene in SD conflicts so as to prevent conflict escalation or resolve an ongoing civil war (Doyle & Sambanis 2006, Beardsley, Cunningham & White 2015). Similarly, interested third states may attempt to mediate between the conflict parties. The United States, for example, played an active role in the negotiations leading to the independence of South Sudan. Finally, as noted above the international community more generally plays a vital role because it can in principle extend recognition to an aspiring nation-state even without the allowance of the host state (Coggins 2011). However, generally speaking the international community upholds the principle of territorial integrity and does not thus generally recognize secessions that do not have the consent of the host state.

3.3 Self-Determination Referendums and the Importance of the Rules of the Game

Prima facie, SD referendums have significant appeal. SD disputes have become an increasingly pertinent feature of world politics. More than every second country on earth faces at least one separatist challenger (see chapter 5). Too many of these conflicts take violent forms. More than a third of all civil wars since 1945 have been fought over self-rule (Sambanis & Milanovic 2014), and there have been many more lower level conflicts. Since the end of the Cold War, separatist armed conflict has become the most common form of armed conflict, including interstate wars (Melander, Petterson & Themnér 2016). The costs resulting from these conflicts—in terms of loss of human life, first of all, but also economic—are tremendous. And even if they do not cost lives, SD disputes often drain significant resources and political capital that could be spent more productively. Why not let the people decide? Why not use a democratic tool—the referendum device—to settle these conflicts peacefully? How can an SD referendum not be a good thing, and even lead to separatist armed conflict?

While intuitive at first sight, the fundamental problem with the referendum solution is that SD referendums do not necessarily represent a neutral conflict resolution mechanism. SD referendums are malleable; they can be designed in a variety of ways. And how they are designed often has strong implications for their outcome. As a result, what constitutes a fair referendum is often contested. As argued, the two primary parties to SD disputes, states and SDMs, tend to have diverging preferences regarding regional self-rule. They thus often also have diverging views regarding the design of a fair SD referendum.

To make this clearer, consider a hypothetical referendum in the context of the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s and the various possibilities that would have existed concerning the referendum demos, or who is allowed to vote in the referendum. Should there be a country-wide referendum on the break-up of the country? Or should each of Yugoslavia's constituent republics be given a separate vote on whether it wants to secede? But what about the ethnic minorities within these republics? For example, should the Croatian Serbs not also get a separate vote on whether they want to secede from Croatia? It is difficult, if not impossible, to say which of the different variants would have been the fairest. As Dahl (1990, p. 45) famously remarked, " there is no theoretical solution to the puzzle [the demos problem]" (also see Oklopcic 2012, Tierney 2007, Tierney 2012). However, the choice of the referendum demos

would have undoubtedly had strong repercussions for the outcome of the referendum. Unsurprisingly, each of the different sides thus had its clear favorites (Brady & Kaplan 1994). As this would have likely meant that Yugoslavia stays together, the Yugoslav establishment favored a country-wide referendum.[5] Meanwhile, the republican elites in Croatia and Slovenia favored referendums in their own republics, as this would have likely paved the way for their independence. And, finally, many Serbian leaders, including Milosevic, favored a separate vote for ethnic minorities within republics, as this would have allowed Serbia to retain Serb-dominated territories.[6] In short, the choice of the referendum demos is likely to affect the outcome, and hence this aspect of referendum design is often severely contested by the parties when it comes to SD referendums.

While perhaps the most important, the referendum demos is not the only referendum rule that might be contested. Another candidate is the issue that is voted on. Should the vote be on autonomy or independence? This may well matter. For instance, the Scottish National Party (SNP) would have favored a three-question referendum including a 'devo-max' (maximal autonomy) option instead of the two-question independence yes or no referendum that was eventually held in 2014, essentially as this would have maximized their chances of winning. 55% of Scots ended up rejecting independence in the 2014 referendum, but had there been a third question on increased autonomy, it may well have passed (Casanas Adam 2014). Another important factor is the decision rule. Should a vote be decided by a simple 50 percent plus 1 majority? Or should there be a qualified majority requirement? Or even a more complex voting procedure whereby votes are counted in small zones (see Laponce 2004)? Evidently these choices are going to matter for the referendum outcome, and they may hence be contested.[7]

3.4 Agreed versus Unilateral Self-Determination Referendums

Given the importance of the rules of the game, SD referendums carry a great potential for strategic manipulation. The initiators of SD referendums explicitly or implicitly set their terms,

[5]Most ethnic Serbs and Montenegrins, who together accounted for more than 40 percent of the population, would have likely opposed the break-up of the state, and several ethnic minorities wavered between secession and continued union, including the Bosniaks and the Macedonians, who only made a definite decision to secede once it has become clear that Croatia and Slovenia would not remain in Yugoslavia (Radan 2002).

[6]The same applies analogously to Serbs and Croats in Bosnia.

[7]Other design factors that may matter for the referendum and may thus be contested include the timing of a referendum, the wording of the ballot question, and rules on campaigning.

and they may exploit this to achieve certain goals. Thus, I argue that a crucial distinction emerges depending on whether SD referendums are invoked under the mutual agreement of both states and SDMs, or whether one of the two parties makes unilateral use of the referendum device.

SD referendums are almost always initiated by one of the two primary parties to SD disputes. States can initiate SD referendums by calling an ad hoc government-initiated referendum, or they may do so indirectly by adopting a territorial reform that requires a constitutionally mandated referendum. Conversely, SDMs can initiate SD referendums if they control a regional government or, where this is possible, by gathering a sufficient number of signatures to trigger a citizen's initiative.[8] But while both primary actors to SD disputes may therefore invoke SD referendums, a crucial distinction emerges depending on whether they do so with the agreement of the respective other party. If states or SDMs initiate SD referendums with the agreement of the respective other party, these tend to be broadly aimed at the finding a mutually acceptable solution. This is, for example, by and large what happened in Scotland in 2014. However, where one of the two parties makes unilateral use of SD referendums, this is likely to represent a self-serving exercise; an attempt by the initiating side to legitimate its own position using a referendum whose terms are strategically stacked towards its own favor. Notably, it is this scenario that has in reality played out in the former Yugoslavia of the early 1990s, when several republics unilaterally staged their own SD referendums, including the Slovenes, the Croats, and the Bosniaks, but also several minorities within the respective republics, including the Serbs in Croatia.

Agreed and unilateral SD referendums thus represent very different animals. They tend to have different motivations, and emerge in different situations. Ultimately, this chapter will argue that the distinction between agreed and unilateral SD referendums even shapes their likely consequences for separatist armed conflict. However, before turning to their consequences for separatist armed conflict, we shall consider in some more detail the conditions under which one can speak of agreement on an SD referendum, the varying motivations for agreed and unilateral

[8]This does not mean that states and SDMs are the only players involved in SD referendums. In particular, the international community has in several cases been instrumental in the genesis of SD referendums, including in East Timor, South Sudan, and Montenegro. However, barring exceptional scenarios such as the plebiscites conducted after World War One in parts of Germany and Austria-Hungary, which were undertaken at the behest of the victorious Allied Powers (Bogdanor 1981*a*), the international community cannot generally initiate SD referendums without local compliance. In all but the most exceptional cases, it is one of the two primary actors to SD disputes that formally triggers referendums on self-rule.

SD referendums, and the nature of the situations in which they are called.

3.4.1 Defining Agreement on the Referendum

In this study, agreement on the referendum is said to exist if the initiation of an SD referendum is uncontested by both states and SDMs, and by implication if there is mutual agreement between the two parties on the rules of the game before the referendum is held. If one of the two parties initiates an SD referendum in the absence of such agreement, I refer to this as a unilateral SD referendum.

Agreement on the referendum may manifest itself in a variety of ways. The most obvious scenario are formal settlements that have been negotiated by representatives from both sides and outline the terms of the referendum. However, there need not be formal negotiations for agreement on the referendum to exist. Agreement on an SD referendum may, for example, also result from an informal arrangement or backdoor deal. Agreement on the referendum may also be implicit, that is, occur without prior consultation between states and SDMs. This may occur, for example, if the separatists exploit established constitutional routines that allow them to trigger SD referendums at their own discretion, such as provisions that allow them to call a referendum by signature gatherings (citizen's initiatives). By providing separatists (and other social groups) with these means, the state can be said to have implicitly endorsed such referendums. However, not all SD referendums that follow constitutional routines are also agreed. The constitutional routines must be mutually uncontested. Below we will see that unilateral SD referendums often also have a legal basis, but that this basis is then contested.

3.4.2 Uses of Agreed Self-Determination Referendums

As argued, agreed SD referendums can in broad terms be said to be aimed at the finding of a mutually acceptable solution to a dispute over self-rule. Upon closer inspection, two sub-types of agreed SD referendums can be identified, depending on the state of negotiations between states and SDMs. Each of the two sub-types comes with its own strategic logic. First, agreed SD referendums can be called to ratify a settlement that has previously been negotiated by representatives of the state and an SDM (ratification referendums). Second, agreed SD referendums can be held before the parties have reached an agreement on the substance of a settlement so as to arbitrate between mutually exclusive positions between states and SDMs (arbitration referendums). I discuss each of the two sub-types of agreed SD referendums in turn, using

examples throughout for illustration. After this, I turn to a discussion of the uses of unilateral SD referendums.

Ratification Referendums

Ratification referendums are mutually agreed SD referendums that are held to ratify a negotiated settlement between the state and an SDM. They search popular approval for a deal that has been negotiated at the elite level and is supported by both sides. Critically, ratification referendums are held when states and SDMs have already come to an agreement on how they want to settle their conflict. The main purpose of ratification referendums is therefore to lend a pre-existing settlement popular approval. By implication, ratification referendums are only rarely seriously contested. The major stumbling blocks have already been resolved and most, or in some cases even all, major factions on both the state's and the SDM's sides support the referendum proposal. Thus, ratification referendums are often rubber-stamp votes where there is little doubt about the outcome.

The twin referendum that was simultaneously held in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in May 1998 to ratify the Belfast Agreement (Good Friday Agreement) constitutes a well-known example of a ratification referendum. The twin referendum was an outflow of inclusive negotiations involving the governments of the United Kingdom and Ireland, as well as all major parties from Northern Ireland, including the most important republican and unionist factions, Sinn Féin (the political wing of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA)) and the Ulster Unionists. In April 1998, they signed the Belfast Agreement, which among other things promised the return of a devolved government to Northern Ireland and a power-sharing agreement guaranteeing representation of both Northern Irish Protestants and Catholics. The only serious opposition to the agreement (but not to the referendum as such) came from the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), at the time the second Protestant party in Northern Ireland, which had dropped out from the negotiations and did not sign the agreement. Under its own terms the Belfast Agreement foresaw ratification via a twin referendum in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. All major state-wide parties in the United Kingdom and Ireland advocated yes votes, including the respective governments. In Northern Ireland, too, all major groupings supported a yes vote, except for the DUP. The agreement was approved by 94 percent of voters in Ireland and 71 percent of voters in Northern Ireland (McGarry & O'Leary 2004, Tonge 2000, Wheatley 2012).

Owing largely to the unique properties of the Northern Ireland conflict, the ratification of the Belfast Agreement involved the unusual step of a second referendum in the Northern Irish Catholics' kin state, the Republic of Ireland. More typically, ratification referendums involve a single vote in the respective separatist region. The referendums that were held in the Basque Country, Catalonia, Galicia, and Andalusia in the late 1970s and early 1980s on their respective Autonomy Statutes constitute examples (Keating & Wilson 2009). The referendums on the original and the improved Greenlandic home rule deals in 1979 and 2008, respectively, may also be cited (Foighel 1980, Greenland-Danish Self-Government Commission 2008, Göcke 2009). The ratification of a settlement may sometimes also involve a national referendum. The whole of France, for example, voted in 1988 on the Matignon Agreements, a settlement that established a devolved government in New Caledonia under which white French settlers were to share power with the indigenous Kanaks (Henningham 1993). Finally, while this is rare given the unwillingness of states to part with territory, ratification referendums may also involve secessions. Armenia and Turkmenistan, for example, both voted on their independence from the Soviet Union in late 1991, at a time where the question of their independence had been all but settled.

Why do states and SDMs decide to involve the people in the ratification process? Settlements between states and SDMs do not by definition involve a referendum. The 1995 Dayton Agreement, for example, which ended the secessionist war(s) in Bosnia and established an extensive power-sharing system, was not put to a popular vote. Nor has there been a referendum at any point in Belgium's continuous movement towards a federal system. Why is it that states and SDMs in some cases opt for the extra step of a referendum, but not in others?

A number of concrete motives for ratification referendums exist. While the following list is unlikely to be exhaustive, an obvious motive are legal requirements for referendums on self-rule questions. In some countries, there are constitutional provisions for mandatory referendums that oblige the parties to refer a settlement to the people. The ratification referendums in the Basque Country, Catalonia, Galicia, and Andalusia in the late 1970s and early 1980s, for example, were directly mandated by the Spanish constitution. A similar case may emerge if there is a precedent. Morel (2007), for example, argues that even in the absence of explicit legal requirements for a referendum, the existence of a precedent can seriously limit the parties' discretion whether to hold a referendum. While weaker than legal requirements, precedents can according to this logic make a referendum obligatory in a political sense. The decision to have a

referendum on the Belfast Agreement, for example, has been argued to be due to similar existing precedents, namely the referendums held earlier in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland itself (Qvortrup 2006).

Where no legal or political requirements for ratification referendums exist, the parties may still decide on a referendum for multiple reasons. France's 1988 referendum on the Matignon Agreement, for example, was in part decided upon to speed up the implementation process. The agreement had been negotiated between New Caledonian leaders and a minority French government. While a sufficient number of the opposition's parliamentarians would have probably voted in favor of the agreement, waiting for parliamentary approval would have slowed down the process, and prime minister Michel Rocard (correctly) calculated that the alternative route involving a national referendum would facilitate the adoption process (Morel 2007, pp. 1048–1049). Similarly, the 1979 referendums in Scotland and Wales on their respective autonomy settlements were held to overcome potential opposition by a minority of the Labour government's backbenchers—a strategy that notably failed, as the proposals, unusually for ratification referendums, ended up being rejected at the polls (Thompson 1989, Rourke, Hiskes & Zirakzadeh 1992).

Finally, an important motive for ratification referendums emerges from the fact that referendums convey a degree of legitimacy that a purely elite-negotiated deal can never enjoy. If they are confident that they have the people's support, the parties may thus opt for the referendum strategy as a way to add special legitimacy to their agreement. Popular approval may, for example, be perceived as useful if one or both sides had to make concessions that they have previously flagged as red lines. Referendums can be used to break path-dependency. Furthermore, the parties may see a ratification referendum as useful to make the deal more palpable to the minority that opposes the settlement and thereby facilitate its future implementation (Morel 2007). In addition to the motives that have been mentioned already, the referendums on the Belfast Agreement, the Matignon Agreements, and the Scottish and Welsh devolution proposals can all also be seen in this light.

Arbitration Referendums

Ratification referendums occur once the parties have successfully negotiated a settlement. However, agreed SD referendums can also be used before the parties have reached an agreement on the future institutional setup. Such referendums emerge if an SDM insists on some maximalist

solution, such as national independence, which the state opposes. A mutually agreed referendum may then be held to arbitrate between the incompatible positions; to remove what would otherwise be a continuing source of conflict; and to come to a decision on the way forward. Typically, arbitration referendums take the form of a vote on the maximalist option favored by the separatists, though in rarer cases it may also be a vote on a proposal by the state that is rejected as insufficient by the separatists.[9]

Two further typical properties of arbitration referendums are worth noting. First, arbitration referendums are likely to be held at the level of the separatist region. The principal rationale is usually to gauge the extent of local support for the goals of the separatists. Second, in contrast to ratification referendums, the outcome of arbitration referendums tends to be fiercely contested. In the former case, there is often little uncertainty about the outcome, as the state and the separatists, or at least most major factions on both sides, are on the same side in the referendum campaign. By contrast, arbitration referendums often become battlegrounds, with the separatists on one side of the aisle and the state and/or local loyalists on the other.

Arbitration referendums usually emerge in one of two ways. First, they can be based on a formal or informal ad-hoc agreement between representatives of the state and the SDM recognizing their incompatibility and their willingness to let a referendum decide the question. Montenegro's 2006 independence referendum constitutes a good example. In 2000, shortly after Milosevic's ouster, the Montenegrin government formally launched a bid for independence. Serbia, however, was unwilling to grant Montenegro independence, and instead advocated a federal solution. A referendum came to be seen as the best way out of negotiation deadlock. Under a deal brokered by the European Union (EU), Serbia and the secessionist Montenegrin government agreed on a referendum that can be called after a three-year transitional period. Montenegro eventually made use of its right in 2006, after another round of extensive, internationally mediated negotiations on the exact terms of the referendum. Crucially, these negotiations led to the instalment of a 55 percent special majority requirement; that is, at least 55 percent of those voting had to vote for independence for independence to pass. The Serbian government largely excluded itself from the subsequent referendum campaign. Nevertheless, the vote was fiercely contested. Montenegro was deeply divided between pro-independence and unionist forces. Ap-

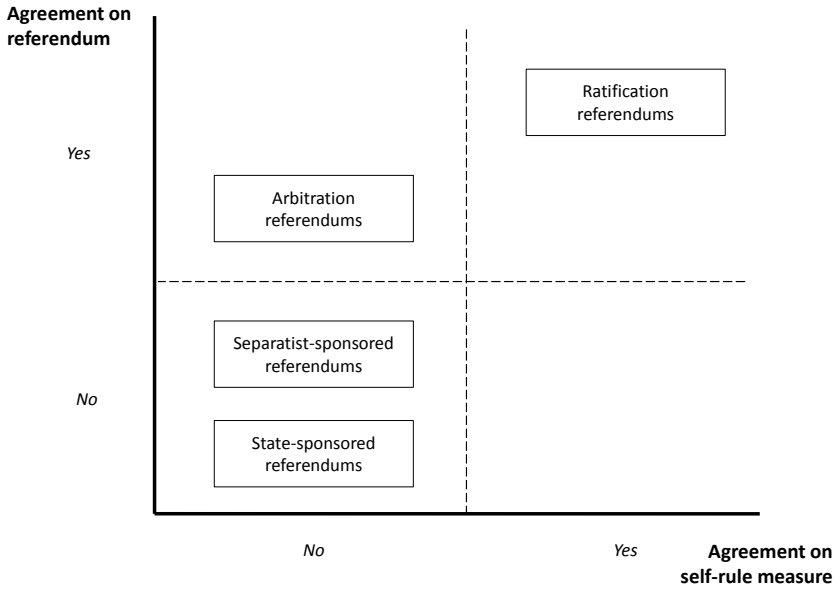
[9]Canada's Charlottetown Accord, which was rejected as too limited by Quebecois secessionists, and the referendum it triggered in 1992 constitutes an example of the latter scenario (LeDuc 2003).

proximately a third of Montenegro's population consider themselves to be ethnic Serbs, and even the ethnic Montenegrins were divided. Opinion polls showed a majority for independence, but the lead of the independence camp was decidedly narrow. In the end, the independence camp prevailed, but on the narrowest of margins: 55.5 percent of voters turned out in favor of independence, only half a percentage point more than required. Serbia subsequently relented and Montenegro became independent (Friis 2007, International Crisis Group 2006, Huszka 2014). Similar cases of arbitration referendums based on an ad-hoc agreement include Scotland's 2014 independence referendum (Casanas Adam 2014), East Timor's 1999 independence referendum (Fernandes 2011, Schulze 2001, Wheeler & Dunne 2001), South Sudan's 2011 independence referendum (Murray & Maywald 2006, Medani 2011), the 1974 referendum on the creation of the Jura canton (Buechi 2012), and the 2004 referendum on a federal arrangement between Cyprus' southern Greek and northern Turkish parts (Loizides 2014).

The second main avenue for arbitration referendums emerges in situations where the separatists have an undisputed constitutional right to initiate a direct popular vote on SD. For example, the 1983 constitution of Saint Kitts and Nevis, a small Caribbean island state, granted the smaller of its two constituent islands, Nevis, the right to call a referendum on independence. In 1998, Nevis made use of this right; independence was narrowly rejected. Similar examples include the two independence referendums held in Quebec in 1980 and 1995, respectively, though the constitutional legality of the Quebec referendums, if in practice undisputed, is somewhat ambiguous from a legal point of view (Leslie 1999). An alternative constitutionally facilitated avenue for separatists to launch an arbitration-type vote on self-rule can emerge in states with provisions for citizen's initiatives. Take Bolivia's 2006 referendum on departmental autonomy. This referendum was initiated by separatists from Santa Cruz, eastern Bolivia, who in February 2005 submitted a petition for a national referendum on departmental autonomy, signed by approximately 430,000 citizens, easily more than the 6% of the total number of registered voters required by law to trigger a popular vote (Eaton 2011, European Union Election Observation Mission Bolivia 2006 2006).[10]

[10]Incidentally, Bolivia's 2006 referendum constitutes one of the very few arbitration cases that included voters outside of the respective separatist region. The reason was probably a lack of alternatives; if there had been such a possibility, the Santa Cruz movement would almost certainly have preferred a vote in its own department.

Figure 3.1: Sub-types of agreed and unilateral SD referendums



3.4.3 Uses of Unilateral Self-Determination Referendums

If states and SDMs are unable to agree on a solution to their conflict, and are also unable to agree on an arbitration referendum to settle their incompatibility, they may unilaterally resort to an SD referendum in an attempt to legitimize their own favored outcome. Again, two sub-types can be distinguished, depending on which side it is that calls the referendum: the separatists or the state. I refer to the two scenarios as separatist- and state-sponsored referendums, respectively, and discuss them in turn. Figure 3.1 provides a schematic overview of the emerging fourfold matrix of the different sub-types of agreed and unilateral SD referendums.

Separatist-Sponsored Referendums

Separatist-sponsored referendums are unilaterally initiated by separatist elites. They lack the state's consent and thus defy the existing constitutional hierarchy. States accordingly see them as illegitimate, illegal, and invalid. This does not mean that separatist-sponsored referendums necessarily have no legal basis. But where such a basis exists, it is contested by the state. Separatist-sponsored referendums are therefore extra-constitutional and unrecognized by the sovereign authorities.

Crucially, the separatists can only unilaterally call SD referendums if they control or have significant access to some sort of a regional government. A referendum as defined in chapter 1 needs to be organized by official authorities, or at least by semi-official authorities, such as the

de facto states of Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria. Thus only separatists that control or have access to some sort of a regional government can unilaterally organize SD referendums; they must have access to polling places, electoral registers, and so forth. Separatist groups without access to a regional government may want to stage their own unilateral referendums, but the best they can do is launch some sort of a private poll. The 2013 "referendum" on the reunification of South Tyrol with Austria constitutes an example; mainly conducted over the Internet, this poll was initiated by a small separatist party, the South-Tyrolean Freedom Movement, in the context of regional parliamentary elections. Such votes cannot be considered referendums as defined in this thesis because they are organized by purely partisan actors that lack even the semblance of an official authority.

The independence referendums that were unilaterally initiated in the early 1990s by regional authorities in the former Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union constitute the archetypal examples of separatist-sponsored referendums, including the referendums held in Slovenia (1990), Croatia, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, and Georgia (all 1991), and Bosnia (1992) (Brady & Kaplan 1994). Catalonia's 2014 independence referendum constitutes a more recent example; this vote was unilaterally organized by the Catalan regional government against the explicit will of the Spanish government, which declared the vote illegal (BBC News 2014, Burg 2015). The 2006 independence referendum in Nagorno-Karabakh, a breakaway region that legally belongs to Azerbaijan but has been de facto independent since a secessionist war in 1991–1994, constitutes an example of a referendum that was organized by a regional authority that lacks official recognition.

Separatist-sponsored referendums naturally occur in contexts where the state and the SDM cannot agree on a settlement. They also very often occur in situations where states and SDMs cannot agree on which demos is entitled to decide their conflict. Separatist-sponsored referendums are called by separatists who, drawing their inspiration from nationalism's guiding principle that each nation has a right to self-determination (Renan 1990, Gellner 1983, Hechter 2000, Hechter 2013), are of the opinion that it is up to their nation to decide its own future. The state, on the other hand, rejects this claim. The Yugoslav case is instructive. Before the wave of separatist-sponsored referendums that swept through the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, there were negotiations about a coordinated referendum on the future of the Yugoslav state. They failed because the representatives of the different ethnic communities (Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Bosniaks, etc.) could not agree on the form of the referendum and, ultimately,

the demos question: should it be the peoples of republics like Croatia who decide, implying that borders remain fixed, or should ethnic minorities within these republics also get a vote, implying that borders would likely have changed (Brady & Kaplan 1994)? Catalonia constitutes another example. The Conservative-led Spanish government rejects any talk about a mutually agreed independence referendum in Catalonia, whereas in Catalonia itself, the Catalan separatist movement has come to revolve around the catch phrase that Catalonia, not Spain, has "the right to decide" (Burg 2015). In the separatists' own nationalist logic, the state's denial of their right to self-rule is fundamentally illegitimate; it is up to their nation, not the state, to decide its own future fate. It follows that separatist-sponsored referendums are invariably held at the regional level, at the level of the nation as it is defined by the separatists;[11] for example, it is Catalonia, not Spain as a whole, that voted on Catalan independence in 2014.

Critically, separatist-sponsored referendums cannot cause policy change in any immediate sense. They are called ultra vires and do not have legal force. Instead, the primary motivation behind such votes is often to establish a popular mandate, to showcase the nation's will. Separatist-sponsored referendums are called in situations where the state denies a group's claim to self-rule and does not allow such a vote despite significant popular support for self-rule among the separatists' constituents. An important feature of separatist-promoted referendums is thus that they are simultaneously highly contested and not contested at all. They are contested and highly divisive because they are revolutionary and defy the existing constitutional order. But at the same time, the referendums themselves are rarely contested because they will only be called in contexts where the separatists can be sure to win, and they are going to be designed in ways that guarantee this win (possibly including outright vote rigging). The goal is to showcase popular support for the separatist agenda; low turnout, winning by a low margin, or even losing the referendum would all be devastating to this cause. When they are called, the outcome of separatist-promoted referendums is rarely in doubt.

In more concrete terms, the separatist initiators may link several hopes to a unilateral

[11] Or at least almost invariably. I know of a single exception. In 1999, the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN), a mostly Mayan rebel group that controlled some territory in Chiapas in southern Mexico, organized a "consulta" involving four questions, at least one of which dealt with the question of land rights and autonomy for Mexico's indigenous peoples. The EZLN aimed to have the referendum held throughout Mexico and explicitly invited non-indigenous communities to participate. While it is not fully clear to what extent the EZLN succeeded in this endeavour, it did manage to set up polling places across Mexico, including in the capital. About 2.5 million voters reportedly participated in the consulta, with more than 95% of participants agreeing to the proposals (Huerta & Higgins 1999, Swords 2007).

expression of popular support. Perhaps most importantly, referendums confer a degree of legitimacy that elite claims can never have. A referendum with a good turnout for increased autonomy or secession demonstrates a level of public support that pure rhetoric cannot prove. The separatist initiators may thus conceive of the referendum as a bargaining chip and hope that it will force the state into a negotiated settlement. Formally, separatist-sponsored referendums may be easily discarded, given their unilateral origins. But in a world where democratic principles are increasingly taken for granted, continuous repression of a region with a proven popular mandate is likely to imply increased costs. Hardliners who oppose accommodation of the separatist demands at any cost may come under fire, also internationally. While separatist-promoted referendums may be 'illegal', they often find their way into the international media. As a consequence, outside actors may increase pressure on the state to resolve the situation. Artur Mas, for example, the former leader of Catalonia, clearly expressed this hope after Catalonia's 2014 referendum: "I ask the people in the world, I ask the media and I also ask the democratic governments in the world to help the Catalan people decide its political future" (News 2014).

There are at least two other concrete motives for separatists to call SD referendums unilaterally. First, the separatist initiators may hope for a mobilization effect. A referendum offers an opportunity to connect with the people at large, and may feasibly ramp up public support for separatism. Second, the separatist leaders may also think of the referendum as a useful basis for a potential future bid for independence. This may be a long shot. The international community rarely recognizes separatist-promoted referendums; Bosnia, which was recognized by the US and the European Communities within days of its unilaterally initiated 1992 referendum, very much constitutes the exception, not the rule.[12] But separatist leaders may feasibly think, not without justification, that a referendum hardly constitutes a disadvantage, especially since referendums increasingly constitute the default solution in internationally mediated secessions, from East Timor over Montenegro to South Sudan.

[12]Bosnia's 1992 referendum had been previously demanded by Western powers as a precondition to extend recognition to Bosnia's unilateral secession from Yugoslavia (Radan 2002, pp. 186–187).

State-Sponsored Referendums

Not only SDMs can unilaterally resort to the SD referendum device. States, too, may do so. Contrary to separatist-sponsored referendums, SD referendums that are unilaterally initiated by states do not generally leave the existing institutional framework. They usually adhere to constitutional procedures. However, they are pushed by the state against the will of SDMs, who regularly call for these referendums to be boycotted.

States unilaterally resort to SD referendums in situations where they cannot find agreement with the separatists on how to resolve their conflict. State-sponsored referendums represent an attempt by the state to legitimize its own position; to create an appearance of consent where none exists. Akin to separatist-sponsored referendums, state-sponsored referendums are thus usually simultaneously contested and not contested at all; they are contested in the sense that they are rejected by the separatists, but uncontested in the sense that their outcome tends to be in little doubt. Like separatist groups, states will only resort to unilateral referendums if they have sufficient certainty about their outcomes, and they are accordingly designed in ways that ensure the state an easy victory.

Like SD referendums that are unilaterally initiated by separatists, SD referendums that are unilaterally initiated by states almost always involve a conflict about the demos. Only in this case it is the state, and not the separatists, that insists on its definition of the relevant people. Consider the example of the 1973 Border Poll in Northern Ireland, which dealt with the possible reunification of Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland. At the heart of this referendum, and the Northern Ireland conflict more generally, lies a fundamental disagreement about the relevant demos. The ethnic demography is such that whereas Catholics clearly outnumber Protestants across Ireland as a whole, Protestants constitute a majority in Northern Ireland itself. Thus, the conflict parties had very different views of what would constitute a fair referendum on reunification with Ireland. For many Irish nationalists, it was Ireland as a whole that should have the right to decide (the 32 counties solution). In contrast, for the Protestant majority in Northern Ireland it was Northern Ireland that should decide (the 6 counties solution). In the event, the British government unilaterally opted for the 6 counties solution. Unlike the twin referendum on the Belfast Agreement that would be held 25 years later, no inclusive negotiations preceded this referendum. The outcome of the referendum was never in doubt, given Northern Ireland's ethnodemographics: 99 percent voted in favor of continued union with the United Kingdom on a 59 percent turnout. Catholic par-

ties, from the most radically nationalist to the most moderate, rejected the referendum and called for a boycott. The Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), the leading Catholic opposition party, referred to the referendum as "a democratic farce" and "an empty exercise" (Bogdanor 1981*a*, Goodhart 1981, Dixon 1997, Dixon 2001, Tierney 2012).

The Border Poll constitutes an example of a state-sponsored referendum in which the state intended to use the referendum device to de-legitimize a maximalist separatist claim or, as the sponsors of the vote expressed it, to "take the border out of politics" (Bogdanor 1981*a*, p. 153). Another similar example is the 1991 all-union referendum in the former Soviet Union, an attempt by Mikhail Gorbachev to de-legitimize minority secessionism in the Baltics and the Caucasus through a union-wide referendum asking voters across the Slavic-dominated state whether they want to "preserve" the Soviet Union (Brady & Kaplan 1994, Peters 1995, Suny 1993, Walker 2003).[13] However, state-sponsored referendums may also have a slightly varied goal: to force through a 'solution' to the state's gusto, a self-rule proposal that the state finds acceptable but is rejected by the separatists as too limited. Consider the example of the 1977 independence referendum in South-West Africa, today's Namibia. In addition to showcasing the varied strategic logics that may be associated with state-sponsored referendums, this case also reiterates the central salience of the demos question. South West Africa's 1977 referendum was an outflow of the Turnhalle Conference, a South African sponsored consultation process on Namibia's constitutional future. Participants were handpicked by the South African government. Critically, the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), the main organization fighting for Namibian independence, was excluded from the process. The Turnhalle Conference's end result was an interim constitution that formally promised Namibia 'independence' but in practice kept Namibia under South African influence and, crucially, retained an apartheid-like system intended to perpetuate White domination. In March 1977 the South African government announced a referendum on the Turnhalle scheme in which only white Namibians were allowed to participate. The outcome was unsurprising. 95 percent of voters agreed with the proposal in the May 1977 referendum (Banks, Muller, Phelan & Smith 1998, Landis 1977, Saunders 2008).[14]

[13]Note that all three Baltic states, Georgia, Armenia, as well as Moldova boycotted the referendum, and with the exception of Moldova instead organized their own unilateral referendums on independence.

[14]Due to international pressure, the Turnhalle scheme was however never enacted.

3.5 Self-Determination Referendums, Agreement on the Referendum, and Separatist Armed Conflict

Having discussed the different uses of agreed and unilateral SD referendums, we are now ready to address their relationship with separatist armed conflict. I here develop an argument that agreed and unilateral SD referendums are likely to emerge in situations where peace and separatist armed conflict are likely to begin with, respectively, but will often reinforce the pre-existing conflict dynamics. Regarding agreed SD referendums, it will be emphasized that these do not constitute risk-free enterprises, but that they on balance are likely to act as catalysts for peace. Conversely, unilateral SD referendums are likely to make a bad situation even worse, and often herald a short countdown to war or, where war is already ongoing, to yet more war. In making my case, I combine existing ideas why SD referendums should be linked to violent or nonviolent outcomes with insights from the broader direct democracy literature, general civil war theories, in particular the grievance school and bargaining theory, and the literature on electoral violence so as to arrive at a fuller picture of the possible implications of SD referendums for conflict processes and the mechanisms that link them to violent or nonviolent outcomes. I proceed in turn, first discussing agreed SD referendums and then proceeding to unilateral SD referendums.

3.5.1 Agreed Self-Determination Referendums as Catalysts for Peace

Agreed SD referendums are likely to emerge in amicable situations. As argued, agreed SD referendums are often the outcome of formal or informal negotiations between states and SDMs, and in the case of ratification referendums the parties have even already found a mutually acceptable solution to their conflict. In other cases, agreed SD referendums emerge as the state provides the separatists with constitutional means to trigger SD referendums at their own discretion, for example by signature gathering. Such referendums are only likely to emerge in consensus-oriented, peaceful societies. Thus, agreed SD referendums generally occur in contexts with a relatively low baseline risk of separatist armed conflict.

This is not to say that agreed SD referendums occur in situations where there is zero risk of violent conflict. Remember that states are generally reluctant to decentralize, except if they consider the costs attached to the status quo as too high. Given that they imply at least a risk for the state to lose powers, agreed SD referendums are thus often the product of intense contestation. The autonomy referendums in Catalonia and Andalusia held in the late

1970s and early 1980s, for example, were preceded by large-scale demonstrations (Thompson 1989). Greenland's 1979 home rule referendum came only after a decade of nonviolent political mobilization (Larsen 1992). The Jura question constituted a source of fierce and bitter conflict that, for Swiss standards, was unheard of. In other cases contention took yet more intense and violent forms. The Northern Irish referendum on the Belfast Agreement, for example, was preceded by three decades of violence. South Sudan's 2011 independence referendum was preceded by a bitter civil war that led to an estimated two million deaths. It would clearly be wrong to suggest that there was zero risk of further violent conflict at the time of these referendums. However, at the time when agreed SD referendums occur, things have typically started to change. Even if they previously engaged in intense contention, states and SDMs now tend to be committed to peace and, in fact, this may be the very reason why they have chosen a mutually agreed SD referendum to resolve their dispute.

Is this strategy likely to work? Are agreed SD referendums indeed favorable to peace? The next few paragraphs will argue that agreed SD referendums, and in particular arbitration referendums, are not without their dangers, but on balance are likely to assist states and SDMs in reaching or keeping peace. I discuss the risks that come with agreed SD referendums first, before turning to their (bigger) potential to enhance peace.

There can be no doubt that agreed SD referendums carry a certain risk of violence. The stakes are often high, creating possible incentives for violence at different stages of the referendum process. The literature on electoral violence commonly distinguishes between pre- and post-election violence (e.g. Cederman, Gleditsch & Hug 2013, Cheibub & Hays 2015, Hafner-Burton, Hyde & Jablonski 2014, Kuhn 2015). Analogously, agreed SD referendums come with a potential for violence both in the run-up and the aftermath of the referendums.

In the pre-referendum phase, violence may be used strategically in an effort to influence the outcome of the referendum.[15] This danger is particularly acute for arbitration referendums, where states (or local loyalists) and separatists often directly confront each other in fierce contests. It may be less acute for ratification referendums, where the referendum's primary function is to confirm a full-fledged negotiated settlement. Still, there may be splinter groups that oppose the deal and try to derail the peace process. Stedman (1997) refers to such actors

[15]There is also a possibility of more spontaneous and uncoordinated violent outbursts in the run-up of the referendum, for example in the context of campaign rallies.

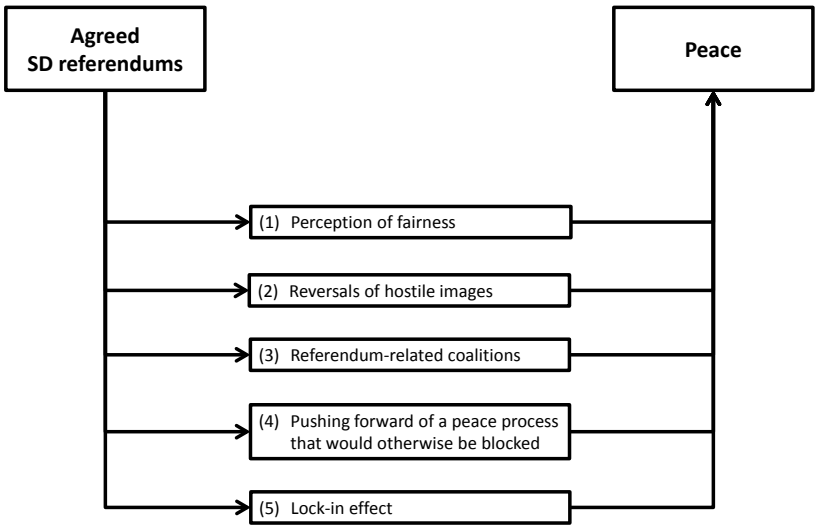
as outside spoilers; parties who are excluded from a peace process or who exclude themselves, and use violence to undermine the peace process. Referendums represent focusing events; they create a focal point for outside spoilers to violently express their continued opposition to a settlement.

There is not only a risk for violence in the pre-referendum phase, but also after the referendum. Violence may, for example, emerge because the losers are unwilling to accept defeat. Perceived or real irregularities may trigger violent protests. Or there may be violent attempts to overturn the referendum outcome.

The archetypical example demonstrating the dangers involved in agreed SD referendums is the 1999 independence referendum in East Timor; an arbitration-type SD referendum in our terminology. The East Timorese separatists had long made claims for a referendum. In 1999, B. J. Habibie, then the Indonesian president, agreed to such a referendum under significant international pressure (Wheeler & Dunne 2001). However, Habibie and his entourage did not want East Timor to secede; rather, they were convinced that they would win the referendum (Fernandes 2011). To ensure a favorable result, local pro-Jakarta militias engaged in a campaign of violence in the run-up to the referendum. However, the real horror came after the vote, when a majority of the East Timorese turned out to vote for independence. With the active encouragement of the Indonesian military, the pro-Jakarta militias rampaged through the province in an effort that has variously been described as an attempt to reverse the result or a scorched earth tactic meant to deter separatists in other parts of Indonesia (Aceh and West Papua, in particular). More than 1,000 were killed and over 250,000 displaced as a result of the post-referendum violence out of East Timor's population of a mere million (Fernandes 2011, Schulze 2001, Tanter, Klinken & Ball 2006).

East Timor constitutes a stark reminder that agreed SD referendums are no panacea. However, the dangers associated with agreed SD referendums have to be put into perspective and weighed against the alternatives. Vote rigging, for example, constitutes a potential problem, but given the generally beneficial circumstances in which agreed SD referendums are held, vote rigging is likely to constitute a relatively rare phenomenon in the context of agreed SD referendums (while probably much more common when it comes to unilateral SD referendums). As argued, agreed SD referendums create several additional incentives for violence, but incentives for violence also exist in peace processes that do not involve referendums. Further, a compromise that equally satisfies all parties rarely exists. Decisions have to be taken. And, on balance,

Figure 3.2: Mechanisms linking agreed SD referendums to peace



taking these decisions via an agreed referendum is likely to promote rather than destroy peace. Several mechanisms, generally related to the high legitimacy that emanates from agreed SD referendums, may account for their power to foster peace. Some of these mechanisms notably suggest that agreed SD referendums may not only promote peace in the immediate context of the referendums, but also way into the future. I now discuss a total of five different mechanisms linking agreed SD referendums to peace. Figure 3.2 provides an overview.

First, agreed SD referendums are likely to contribute to a perception of fairness and thus decrease grievances. Advocates of referendums often argue that referendums increase the willingness to play along with collectively binding decisions (Pateman 1970, Barber 1984). Esaiasson, Gilljam & Persson (2012) provide experimental evidence that decisions taken by referendum are accorded higher legitimacy than other forms of decision-making, including in particular decisions made by representatives. Thus, referendums have the potential to increase acceptance among the 'losers' and to lower perceptions of grievance due to unfair treatment. However, perceptions of fairness are only likely to emerge if the rules of the game have been previously agreed. Only then can the losers be expected to accept defeat. This is likely to increase chances for peace, as perceptions of fairness are likely to decrease the willingness of the losers to use violence (Cederman, Gleditsch & Buhaug 2013, Gurr 2000*c*). Further, even if some remain who would like to resort to violence, they become likely to face recruitment problems. Violence becomes difficult to justify in processes that are widely perceived as fair and legitimate

(Bogdanor 1981*a*, Cederman, Gleditsch & Buhaug 2013). Tony Blair, the former British prime minister, clearly expressed this logic in the wake of the 1998 referendum on the Belfast Agreement: "From now on, no one who turns to violence to make their case can do so other than in open defiance of the will of the people" (cited in Loizides 2009, p. 5). Thus, by creating perceptions of fairness, agreed SD referendums are likely to decrease the spectre of violence both during and after the referendum campaign, and may feasibly increase chances for peace way into the future. In the case of Northern Ireland, paramilitaries have laid down their arms in the aftermath of the referendum, including the Real Irish Republican Army, a small Irish Catholic splinter group that violently opposed the Belfast Agreement (Collin 2015, Loizides 2009).

Second, agreed SD referendums may support a reversal of hostile images, thus further lowering grievances and the plausibility of violence. In ratification referendums, the state and the separatists have to make the case for their negotiated settlement, and may thus for the first time defend a shared political vision for the future (Collin 2015). This is by definition not the case in arbitration referendums, where states and SDMs form opposite camps, but the antagonists face off in a controlled environment that forces them to verbally make their case. Referendum campaigns can create space for deliberation (Tierney 2009, Tierney 2012, Stephens 2015). To the extent that the contestants manage to avoid ethnically charged hate speech, a peaceful exchange of ideas may create a better understanding of the respective other side's position, thus lowering grievances and helping to avoid conflict in the future. Furthermore, agreed SD referendums may more generally demonstrate support for a given measure that transcends ethnic lines, providing a basis for a shared political vision for the future (Loizides 2009). McGarry & O'Leary (2009) argue that the fact that the Belfast Agreement was supported by a majority of both Catholics and Protestants in the 1998 referendum created a positive dynamic. Similarly, the fact that both ethnic Ukrainians and Russians overwhelmingly voted in favor of Ukraine's independence in the 1991 referendum was widely seen as a positive sign.

Third, the high legitimacy that comes from agreed SD referendums favors the emergence of domestic and international coalitions that are ready to defend and support the referendum process (Collin 2015). Referendum-related coalitions may include elites from both the state and the SDM side, but also civil society organizations. Often, they also include international actors. These may be interested third parties, such as the US in Northern Ireland or South Sudan and Australia and Portugal in East Timor. It may also be intergovernmental organizations. The EU, for example, facilitated the negotiations leading to Montenegro's 2006 independence

referendum and de facto played the role of a guarantor. The UN helped negotiate, administer, and monitor agreed SD referendums in Eritrea, East Timor, and South Sudan, amongst others. These referendum-related coalitions are likely to deter violence, both in the pre- and the post-referendum phase. Whoever uses violence in the run-up to agreed SD referendums to influence the result of the referendum or to derail the process will face powerful condemnation. Further, given the high legitimacy associated with consensually reached popular decisions, a violent challenge to the outcome is likely to trigger a strong response. To the extent that these referendum-related coalitions persist, they are likely to deter violence way into the future. The East Timor example shows that referendum-related violence remains a possibility. But it also shows that referendum coalitions are willing to defend the outcome of agreed SD referendums; Australia, Portugal, and the US exerted strong pressure on the Indonesian government to withdraw the military and within two weeks a UN peacekeeping mission was deployed to halt the violence.

A fourth mechanism linking agreed SD referendums to peace is that they can facilitate decision-making and push forward a peace process that might otherwise be blocked. This argument applies foremost to arbitration referendums. Scholars that are critical of SD referendums often deplore that referendums necessarily create winners and losers while offering little room for those wishing to explore centrist positions (e.g. Mac Ginty 2003, Reilly 2008). While this may be true, it is also true that there are situations where one side has to lose. A territory cannot be simultaneously independent and not independent, or have autonomy over income tax and not have autonomy over income tax. States and SDMs often have fundamentally different visions for the future, and even if both sides value peace, elite-level negotiations may fail to reach a compromise solution that satisfies both sides. In such situations, one side ultimately has to relent. Otherwise negotiation deadlock looms, which may motivate one or both sides to move the conflict to the battle field. If the parties can find agreement on an arbitration referendum, this may constitute the best available method to resolve the incompatibility. A referendum frees elites from making a decision themselves. Arbitration referendums can thus push forward a process that might otherwise be blocked. At the same time, as argued above, referendums increase the probability that the losing side can accept defeat. Furthermore, referendums can be used to legitimate concessions that have previously been flagged as red lines (Morel 2007). Losing is easier after a referendum compared to losing after elite-level negotiations. In a situation where the state and an SDM cannot agree on a settlement, a mutually agreed arbitration

referendum may thus constitute the best route available to reach a decision on which way to go.[16]

Finally, agreed SD referendums may also enhance peace by locking in concessions by the state. State leaders sometimes make promises to SD groups that they then fail to implement. For example, in the 1947 Panglong Agreement the Burmese authorities promised the Shans that they could secede after a ten-year trial period, but later retracted this right. Even if promises are implemented, future leaders may be tempted to revoke earlier concessions. This danger is most acute for autonomy arrangements. Secessions, once implemented, are difficult to reverse. By contrast, hardliners may come to power at a later point in time and begin to dismantle an autonomy arrangement (Cederman, Hug, Schädel & Wucherpfennig 2015, Lake & Rothchild 2005). A prominent example comes from the short-lived attempt at power-sharing in Northern Ireland in the context of the 1973–1974 Sunningdale Agreement, which failed as a result of unionist (Protestant) obstruction. Another comes from southern Sudan, where a regional autonomy system was installed in 1972 after the First Sudanese Civil War, but revoked 11 years later by an Islamist central government in Khartoum.

The dangers raised by unmet or revoked promises are twofold. On the one hand, unmet promises and revocations of earlier concessions are likely to escalate perceptions of maltreatment by the state. A likely consequence is war (Cederman, Wimmer & Min 2010, Cederman, Gleditsch & Buhaug 2013). For example, Khartoum's decision to revoke the south's autonomy led to the Second Sudanese Civil War, whereas Burma's retraction of the Shans' right to secede (which went hand in hand with a retraction of autonomy) led to a decades-long insurgency. On the other hand, the pure possibility that state leaders may not stick to their promises creates a commitment problem and may make violence a rational strategy. SDMs that fear that the state may not stick to its promises have reasons to strike first and seek a decisive victory (Fearon 1995, Fearon 1998, Powell 2006, Walter 1997, Walter 2002).

Agreed SD referendums counter these problems because they provide a safeguard to SD groups. This is so because mutually agreed referendums, assuming they pass, make it more difficult for the state to backtrack from earlier promises. As argued above, agreed SD referendums

[16]It should be noted that while the decision-facilitating argument applies foremost to arbitration referendums, it has some relevance also for ratification referendums. Above I argued that ratification referendums are sometimes strategically deployed to facilitate the ratification of a settlement, for example to circumvent potential opposition in parliament or to break path-dependency and legitimate policy reversals. To the extent that these strategies succeed, ratification referendums can facilitate the adoption of a settlement and thus contribute to peace.

are likely to create perceptions of a fair decision and may lead to referendum-related coalitions that are willing to uphold the outcome of the referendum. Further, the high legitimacy that comes with agreed SD referendums may well make another referendum the only politically feasible way to overturn a decision—independently of whether such a referendum is foreseen in the settlement itself or not. This creates an additional, if often informal, veto player: the people. Standard versions of institutional theory suggest that the higher the number of veto players—actors whose agreement is necessary to change the status quo—the more likely is the status quo to prevail (Hug & Tsebelis 2002, Tsebelis 2002). Thus, agreed SD referendums may increase the endurance of an arrangement even if hostile forces subsequently take over. For example, in Northern Ireland, public support for the only major party opposed to the 1998 Belfast Agreement, the radically unionist and anti-Belfast Agreement DUP, grew significantly in subsequent years. But unlike the earlier Sunningdale Agreement, the Belfast Agreement survived, which Loizides (2009) partly attributes to the constraints imposed by the 1998 referendum.[17] For all these reasons, agreed SD referendums make it less likely that conflict subsequently breaks out as a result of the state retracting its promises. Further, agreed SD referendums provide a signal to SD groups that the state is willing to stick to its guns, and thus constitute confidence-building measures working to mitigate commitment problems. By consequence, agreed SD referendums' long shadow is likely to increase chances for peace in the short but also in the longer term.

3.5.2 Unilateral Self-Determination Referendums as Catalysts for Separatist Armed Conflict

In stark contrast to agreed SD referendums, unilateral SD referendums usually occur in decidedly hostile contexts. The need for a unilateral SD referendum only arises in situations where the parties cannot find much common ground. By implication, unilateral SD referendums are often called in situations with a substantial ex-ante risk that the SD dispute escalates and moves to the battle field, independently of the referendum itself. In other cases, the risk of separatist armed conflict is no longer latent and the parties already exchange fire. For example, in late 1991 Armenian rebels unilaterally organized a referendum on the independence of Nagorno Karabakh in the context of an ongoing and increasingly violent secessionist conflict with the

[17] It should be added that the fact that referendum results can usually only be overturned with another referendum is not without its own problems. A vote against an emerging peace proposal may block progress for years to come. The 2004 referendum in Cyprus constitutes an example (Loizides 2009).

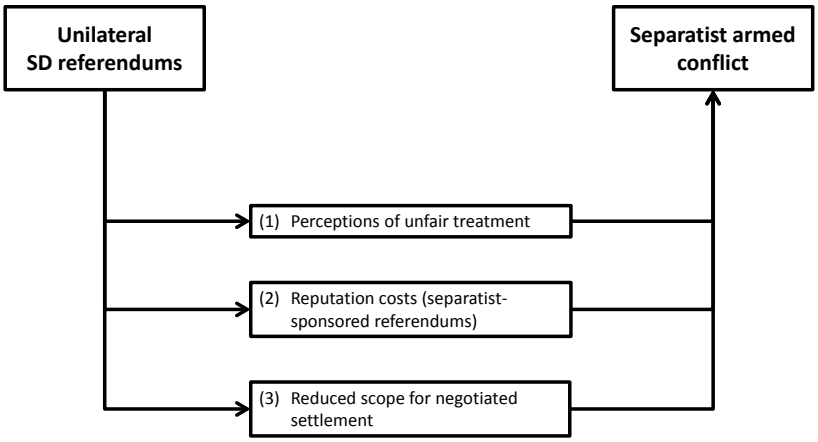
Azeri government that escalated to full-scale civil war soon after the referendum. Similarly, South Ossetia's 1992 unilateral independence referendum occurred in the context of the 1991–1992 South Ossetian War, while the South African-sponsored 1977 Namibian independence referendum occurred in the context of the 1966–1990 Namibian War of Independence.[18]

The benefits that may come from mutually agreed SD referendums in terms of a reduction of the risk of violent conflict are unlikely to emerge in the case of unilateral SD referendums. While agreed SD referendums carry great legitimacy, unilaterally initiated SD referendums at best carry ambiguous legitimacy. The initiators may attribute significant legitimacy to unilateral SD referendums, but the addressees reject their terms and see them as illegitimate. Because their legitimacy is disputed, mutual perceptions of fairness are unlikely to emerge and the losers in unilateral SD referendums are unlikely to accept defeat. Unilateral SD referendums are also very unlikely to feature balanced debates that could help create mutual understanding between the conflict parties. Instead, unilateral SD referendums typically feature lopsided propaganda campaigns; in some cases the opposition is barred from making its case; in others the opposition chooses to boycott the referendum process. Referendum-related coalitions including representatives of both sides that are committed to defending and supporting the referendum process are unlikely to emerge. The international community almost never recognizes unilateral SD referendums and rarely plays any role in them. Unilateral SD referendums such as the ones in Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia, which the international community cited as legitimation for the recognition of their unilateral secessions from Yugoslavia, constitute the exceptions, not the rule. Finally, given their disputed nature, unilateral SD referendums are also unlikely to push forward a blocked peace process and generally provide no safeguard to SD groups worried about the seriousness of promises by state leaders.

This is not to say that unilateral SD referendums represent an irrational strategy. The initiators of unilateral SD referendums do not aim at a peaceful exchange of arguments. As argued, unilateral SD referendums are initiated to enforce the initiator's position. This strategy may well succeed. While Nagorno Karabakh and South Ossetia officially remain part of Azerbaijan and Georgia, respectively, Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia all attained independence subsequently to their unilateral referendums. Tatarstan, a Russian ethnic republic that unilaterally voted in

[18]That said, it may be the case that unilateral SD referendums tend to emerge in situations where the initiators think they can get away without causing bloodshed. This would suggest that unilateral SD referendums tend to emerge in conflictual, but not the most conflictual situations.

Figure 3.3: Mechanisms linking unilateral SD referendums to separatist armed conflict



favor of increased autonomy in a 1992 referendum, was able to negotiate favorable terms with Russia in the aftermath of the referendum, gaining among other things substantial control over its natural resources (George 2009, p. 63, Peters 1995, p. 205). Gorbachev's attempt to halt the disintegration of the Soviet Union with his 1991 union-wide referendum on the preservation of the union may have ultimately failed. But a similar attempt in 1992 by the leaders of Karachay-Cherkessia, another Russian ethnic republic, to block the possible partition of the republic with a unilateral referendum on the unity of the republic proved more successful as it substantially weakened supporters of partition (Comins-Richmond 2002, pp. 75–76, Peters 1995, p. 208).[19]

However, even if sometimes successful, unilateral SD referendums represent a provocative and dangerous strategy. They are acts of brinkmanship that may significantly increase the risk of separatist armed conflict.[20] At least three mechanisms plausibly link unilaterally called referendums on SD with separatist armed conflict, especially in the immediate context of the referendum. Figure 3.3 provides an overview.

First, unilateral SD referendums are likely to increase grievances. This applies especially to

[19] Another, if as I argue below in many cases probably misguided, motivation for unilateral SD referendums may be to avoid violent conflict. The initiators may anticipate violent conflict but hope to avoid it by demonstrating commitment to their claim and thus deter the opponent.

[20] As argued in footnote 19, the initiators of unilateral SD referendums may or may not be aware of this.

the 'losers' in unilateral SD referendums: those at which unilateral SD referendums are targeted. Consider the case of state-sponsored referendums. States that unilaterally resort to referendums to de-legitimize separatist goals or to force through a limited form of accommodation are likely to foster perceptions of unfair treatment among the separatist minority. This should apply especially if, as is often the case, state-sponsored referendums rely on a demos definition that is rejected by the separatists. Nationalist ideology ultimately rests on the rejection of alien rule (Gellner 1983, Hechter 2000, Hechter 2013), but in state-sponsored referendums it is often 'outsiders' that ultimately carry the vote. In Northern Ireland's 1973 Border Poll, it was the Protestant majority that decided over the legitimacy of the Catholic minority's secessionist ambitions. In Gorbachev's 1991 all-union referendum, it was the Soviet Union's Slavic majority that decided over the legitimacy of minority secessionist movements in the Baltics and in Georgia, among others. States that unilaterally organize such referendums without prior separatist consent violate the separatists' fundamental guiding principle: their own nation's right to self-determination.

In addition to the demos definition, several other 'techniques' designed to ensure the desired result may contribute to perceptions of unfair treatment, including one-sided and inflammatory propaganda, violent or nonviolent voter intimidation, or manipulations of the vote count. For example, the run-up to Gorbachev's 1991 all-union referendum featured a non-stop media blitz in favor of the referendum whereby nay-sayers were denied access to countrywide outlets. In addition, there were widespread reports of voter intimidation. To give a flavor, in Ukraine members of Rukh, the independence-minded popular front, were detained, while voters in a number of villages were reportedly told that if their village were to vote against the preservation of the union, fuel supplies would not be forthcoming. Reports of ballot stuffing were also common (Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe 1992, Brady & Kaplan 1994). In the campaign for the 1992 referendum on the unity of Karachay-Cherkessia (an ethnic republic in Russia), the repulican leaders floated rumours that Karachay separatists would seek unification with Turkey and expel the local Cossacks if they were to get their own republic. Furthermore, soldiers were sent to polling places in predominantly Karachay districts on voting day, and there were widespread reports of vote rigging (Comins-Richmond 2002, pp. 75–76).

Now consider the case of separatist-sponsored referendums. Here, the signs are reversed; it is not the state that targets a unilateral SD referendum against the separatists, but the separatists that target a unilateral SD referendum against the state. By implication, separatist-

sponsored referendums are likely to increase perceptions of unfair treatment primarily on the state side.[21] Separatist-sponsored referendums constitute revolutionary events that transgress the established constitutional order. They occur without the prior consent of the state, who denies the minority's right to decide on its constitutional status and often insists on a different definition of the demos that should be entitled to make the decision on self-rule. Thus, separatist-sponsored referendums are likely to foster an image on the part of state leaders and their constituents that they are dealing with a restive minority. Passions may be further inflamed by an incendiary referendum campaign, which may involve wild accusations against the state and the majority population of the country. Separatist-sponsored referendums are often preceded by fiery, ethnically charged propaganda campaigns intended to whip up support for the separatist outcome. Radical separatist elites tend to run the show, while moderates are silenced and state elites often exempted (or they exempt themselves so as not to legitimize an "illegal" referendum). For example, in the run-up to Slovenia's 1991 independence referendum Slovenes were flooded with media propaganda highlighting the Yugoslav state's responsibility for Slovenia's economic crisis and stoking fear of Serbia and Serbs, more generally (Huszka 2014, pp. 51–54). In the campaign leading to Transnistria's unilateral 1991 independence referendum, the leaders of the unrecognized republic pushed allegations of Moldova suppressing the Russian language and culture (Peters 1995, p. 192). Incendiary language such as this is likely to increase antipathy on the side of the state and its constituents, thus adding to a perception of grievance. Where separatists resort to such practices as voter intimidation or ballot stuffing these may add fuel, too. For example, in the case of Transnistria's 1991 referendum there were reports of widespread attempts to intimidate pro-Moldova voters in the run-up to the vote, including murders of pro-Moldova activists, and the final tally was likely falsified (Kaufman 1996, p. 128).

However, unilateral SD referendums may not only increase grievances among their targets, but also among the constituents of the initiating side. There are several reasons. In the case of separatist-sponsored referendums, the state authorities may try to disrupt the voting process, which may cause perceptions of unwarranted meddling in 'internal' affairs on the side of the separatist group. More generally, the targets' rejection of what supporters of the initiating side see as a perfectly legitimate process is likely to fuel perceptions of maltreatment. Finally,

[21] In the civil war literature, the grievance concept is usually used as a (partial) explanation for the actions of opposition groups, but there is no principled reason why the behavior of incumbents should not also be driven by perceptions of unfair treatment by the opposition.

the incendiary propaganda that tends to accompany unilateral SD referendums may also shore up grievances among the initiating side. As argued, the initiators of unilateral SD referendums often make wild accusations regarding past maltreatment to whip up support, and to the extent that they succeed, the level of grievance is likely to increase among group members.

In sum, then, unilateral SD referendums are likely to entrench grievances primarily among members of the target group, but sometimes also among the initiator's constituents. A possible consequence of this is an escalatory spiral ending in separatist armed conflict. Such an outcome should be especially likely in the immediate context of unilateral SD referendums when the referendum-induced grievances are freshly felt. Among the separatists, a likely consequence of unilateral SD referendums is that they are dealing with an exploitative and repressive state. This is likely to motivate rebellion because a perception of unfair treatment reinforces the plausibility, justifiability, and diffusion of the idea that the state needs to be violently "smashed" (Goodwin 1997), thus sharpening people's willingness to seek redress (Jasper 1998, Gurr 1993, Gurr 2000*c*, Petersen 2002, Petersen 2011, Regan & Norton 2005). Furthermore, widely shared perceptions of unfair treatment by the state help (potential) rebels overcome collective action problems as they amplify solidarity among group members. Aggrieved individuals are likely to experience anger, frustration, resentment, or outrage not only over the maltreatment of themselves but also over the maltreatment of other group members or the group as a whole, which can motivate group-centered, altruistic behavior (Jasper 1998, Gurr 2000*c*, Cederman, Gleditsch & Buhaug 2013, Wood 2001, Wood 2003). In turn, unilateral SD referendums are likely to strengthen the conviction among state leaders and their constituents that they are dealing with a restive minority with which it is difficult to deal with in a peaceful way. Thus, unilateral SD referendums may motivate state leaders to take a harsh line against separatists and trigger a violent response in an attempt to restore the "rightful" constitutional order. Note that this argument is also consistent with rational bargaining models of war, as states or separatist groups that unilaterally stage referendums to push through their own position betray an inability to reach (or keep) a credible commitment to resolve the conflict peacefully (e.g. Fearon 1995).

In addition to raising grievances, unilateral SD referendums may increase the risk of separatist armed conflict because they can lead to significant reputation costs for the state. This is the second mechanism linking unilateral SD referendums to separatist armed conflict—though it notably only applies to separatist-sponsored referendums. Many states do not just face one sep-

aratist challenger, but multiple. Spain's sovereignty, for example, is challenged by various separatist groups, including the Basques, the Catalans, and the Galicians. Even if there is no other challenger, there might be further potential challengers down the road that may not have yet made a formal claim but may feasibly do so in the future. When dealing with a separatist challenger, states thus always have to consider the possible knock-on effects on other actual or potential challengers. If the state signals weakness towards one challenger, this may spur others to demand the same treatment. Hence, when faced with a separatist challenger, states have incentives to misrepresent their willingness to negotiate and make compromises so as to deter potential future challengers (e.g. Toft 2003, Treisman 2004, Walter 2006*a*, Walter 2006*b*, Walter 2009). By implication, when a separatist group launches a unilateral referendum to legitimize its claim to self-rule, it may be rational for the state to crack down on this group and set an example—notably even if the state is in principle willing to accommodate the group's demand. Otherwise the state may invite further costly challenges in the form of referendums by other groups that expect the same treatment. The result may be an escalatory spiral, whereby the state's violent response to the referendum is met with a response in kind, thus paving the road for violent conflict. Again, escalation should be particularly likely to occur with close temporal proximity to the referendum. States that are concerned about their reputation because of a unilateral referendum initiated by separatists should react swiftly rather than wait and see.

Finally, the third mechanism that may link unilateral SD referendums to armed conflict over SD is that unilateral referendums reduce the scope for a negotiated settlement. As previously argued, referendums tend to have a long shadow; they create path dependency. While largely a positive feature if SD referendums are agreed, this can have dire consequences if SD referendums are called unilaterally. Popular mandates generated by unilateral SD referendums may create constraints for future negotiations that will complicate the finding of a mutually acceptable solution—notably even if more moderate forces take over after a referendum. Consider the case of separatist-sponsored referendums. SD referendums that are unilaterally initiated by separatists usually involve maximalist proposals, such as outright secession. If the separatist initiators succeed in generating a strong popular mandate for their maximalist proposals, this is likely to limit possibilities for a subsequent peaceful settlement with the state. Even if more moderate views gain ground after the referendum, representatives of the separatist minority will find it difficult to backtrack substantially from a claim that has been approved in a referendum. Especially if they pass by a wide margin, separatist-sponsored referendums effectively lock in

maximalist claims, such as outright secession.[22] The same mechanism may also come into play in the aftermath of SD referendums that are unilaterally initiated by states. If the state unilaterally establishes a popular mandate against the demands of a separatist movement, as the British government did in the 1973 Border Poll, this may constrain the bargaining space for the foreseeable future. Unilateral SD referendums, whether they are initiated by separatists or by the state, can severely hamper subsequent attempts to find a peaceful solution by constraining the range of available options. This may make war inevitable, especially in the immediate aftermath of referendums when bargaining constraints will be strongly felt, but possibly also in the longer term.

3.6 Summary

This chapter argued that the relationship between SD referendums and separatist armed conflict is crucially shaped by how these referendums come about. Two broad scenarios were distinguished—agreed and unilateral SD referendums. Both agreed and unilateral SD referendums are likely to act as catalysts for pre-existing conflict dynamics. Agreed SD referendums, on the one hand, tend to emerge in amicable contexts, but make peace yet more likely. On the other hand, unilateral SD referendums tend to emerge in decidedly hostile contexts, and they yet raise possibilities for violent conflict.

SD referendums can be considered agreed if their initiation is uncontested by the two primary parties to SD disputes, states and SDMs, and if they are thus in prior agreement on the rules that guide the referendum. Agreed SD referendums can be said to be generally held with a view to an amicable resolution of a self-rule conflict. A more detailed analysis revealed two more specific motivations. First, agreed SD referendums may be aimed at the ratification of a pre-existing, negotiated settlement. Second, they may be held to arbitrate between different preferences of states and SDMs and reach a decision on a persisting incompatibility. Irrespectively of what exactly their purpose is, agreed SD referendums tend to be held in situations where the prospects for peace are relatively good. And while agreed referendums carry certain risks, on

[22] Commitment problems caused by referendums' long shadow may add to the problems with finding a negotiated settlement. To the extent that state leaders share the premise that it is difficult to back down from a claim that was approved in a referendum, they will distrust any post-referendum signals that the separatists might be willing to settle for less. Thus, states may become wary of making concessions as they expect that this will only embolden the minority to make more demands or to continue with its radical agenda from a position improved by those very concessions (Grigoryan 2015).

balance they are likely to make the prospect for peace even better. A total of five mechanisms were identified that plausibly link agreed SD referendums to better chances for peace, both in the immediate context of the referendums and in the longer term. First, agreed SD referendums create perceptions of fairness, thus decreasing the willingness to use force, but also the feasibility of violence by creating recruitment problems. Second, agreed SD referendums may bolster mutual understanding and contribute to a reversal of hostile images, thus further reducing grievances and the plausibility of violence. Third, agreed SD referendums favor the emergence of broad coalitions willing to support and defend the referendum process, thus deterring potential spoilers. Fourth, agreed SD referendums can push forward a peace process that might otherwise be blocked. And finally, agreed SD referendums can make it more likely that the state sticks to its guns, thus preventing future conflict due to retractions of earlier promises while also acting as a confidence-building measure mitigating commitment problems among the separatist minority.

In stark contrast to agreed SD referendums, unilateral SD referendums are pushed by one of the two primary parties to SD disputes over the objections of the other. Both states and SDMs can initiate unilateral SD referendums, but irrespectively of who stands behind them, unilateral SD referendums generally represent an attempt by the initiating party to push through its own preferred outcome. Thus, these referendums generally emerge in situations where states and SDMs are unable or unwilling to find a mutually acceptable solution to their conflict, and by implication, where there already is a substantial risk of violent conflict. I argued that unilateral SD referendums are likely to make things even worse and increase the risk of separatist armed conflict, especially in the short term. Three reasons were made out. First, unilateral SD referendums shore up perceptions of maltreatment among the separatist minority, the state and its constituents, or both, thus increasing the attractiveness and plausibility of violent tactics. Second, if the separatists unilaterally (and illegally) invoke a referendum, the state is likely to mount a strong and possibly violent response due to emerging reputation costs. Finally, unilateral SD referendums are likely to increase the risk of violent separatist conflict because they reduce the scope for a negotiated settlement.

The remainder of this thesis sets out to test the hypothesized links between agreed and unilateral SD referendums and separatist armed conflict. The subsequent two chapters prepare the ground for this by introducing the two main sources of data on which the empirical tests will be based.

Chapter 4

New Data on Self-Determination Referendums

4.1 Introduction

Good data on SD referendums and their form of initiation constitutes an important prerequisite for the empirical tasks that lie before us. This chapter introduces the data on SD referendums on which the empirical analyses presented in later chapters will be based. The chapter is split in two parts. The first details how this data was assembled. There is no pre-existing, research-ready data source available that would identify the universe of SD referendums, let alone more detailed data on whether these referendums were held under agreed terms or initiated unilaterally. However, there have been several attempts to cover the worldwide experience with referendums on sovereignty issues, a broader category of referendums of which the SD referendum forms a subset. Section 4.1 details how the universe of SD referendums was established based on the newest and most complete such attempt: the Contested Sovereignty dataset. In a subsequent step, I describe the coding rules and sources used to add information on the form of initiation (agreed versus unilateral), as well as to identify the different sub-types of agreed and unilateral SD referendums (ratification, arbitration, separatist-sponsored, and state-sponsored SD referendums).

The description of coding rules and sources is naturally somewhat technical. Some readers may therefore want to move directly to section 4.2, which provides a descriptive overview of the global experience with SD referendums. In a first step, I will trace the history of the SD referendum back to its modest beginnings in the late 18^{th} century, and make out several

important patterns in the use of SD referendums over time and space. Most importantly, we will see that SD referendums have proliferated remarkably over time, thus underlining the policy relevance of investigating their conflict resolution potential. Next, we take a closer look at patterns in the use of agreed and unilateral SD referendums. Answers will be given as to where and when agreed and unilateral SD referendums were held and what type of self-rule they have tended to deal with. Finally, we take a look at the outcomes of SD referendums so as to substantiate the claim made in chapter 3 that the distinction between the different types of agreed and unilateral SD referendums is visible also in these referendums' outcomes.

4.2 Coding Rules and Data Sources

4.2.1 Identifying Self-Determination Referendums

This study identifies the universe of SD referendums based on data from the Contested Sovereignty dataset, version 1.1 (Mendez & Germann 2016, Aubert, Germann & Mendez 2015). This dataset is the outflow of a three-year collaboration between Fernando Mendez, Nicolas Aubert, and the author, and assembles the worldwide experience with sovereignty referendums, a broader category of referendum that overlaps with the present conceptualization of the SD referendum, but also includes other referendums on sovereignty issues, such as referendums on national unifications or referendums on the pooling of sovereignty at the supranational level.

The Contested Sovereignty dataset is not the first attempt to code sovereignty referendums. Over the years there have been several attempts to map the worldwide experience with sovereignty referendums (e.g. Laponce 2010, Sussman 2006) and similar concepts that in practice largely coincide with the concept of the sovereignty referendum, including ethnonational referendums (Qvortrup 2014*a*) and referendums on boundary and identity questions (He 2002). However, these existing attempts suffer from a number of weaknesses. Perhaps most importantly, they all miss out a substantial share of the worldwide experience with sovereignty referendums. The Contested Sovereignty dataset offers much-improved coverage, as it is based on the richest set of sources yet consulted in the coding of sovereignty referendums (for an extended discussion of the weaknesses in existing datasets and the ways in which the Contested Sovereignty dataset improves upon the status quo see Mendez & Germann 2016). In addition to existing compilations of sovereignty referendums and related concepts, a large range of previously neglected sources were consulted, including encyclopedic sources listing the worldwide or regional

experiences with referendums (in particular Butler & Ranney 1994*a*, Centre for Research on Direct Democracy 2011) and elections more generally (e.g. Nohlen, Krennerich & Thibaut 1999, Nohlen & Stöver 2010), encyclopedic sources dealing with ethnic separatism and sovereignty processes more generally (in particular Hewitt & Cheetham 2000, Minahan 2002, Minorities at Risk Project 2009), and several historical treatments of referendums involving sovereignty issues (e.g. Fauchille 1925, Freudenthal 1891, Gawenda 1946, Mattern 1920, Scelle 1934). In addition, a broad array of modern academic literature was surveyed dealing with referendums in the context of sovereignty or macro-historical processes related to important developments involving sovereignty transfers more generally, such as literature on the creation of the American Union (e.g. Shearer 2004). Furthermore, keyword searches in news archives were conducted, such as Lexis Nexis. As a result, the Contested Sovereignty dataset includes many cases that have been previously overlooked and, with more than 600 sovereignty referendums identified between 1776 and 2015, it includes more than double the number of cases identified in existing datasets spanning a similar time period. The dataset provides information on when and where these referendums were held, the type of issues voted on, and their outcomes.

SD referendums as defined in chapter 1 constitute a subset of the broader category of the sovereignty referendum. The Contested Sovereignty dataset defines sovereignty referendums as a direct popular vote on a reallocation of territorially based sovereignty between at least two territorial centers (Mendez & Germann 2016, p. 5). In turn, SD referendums are here defined as direct popular votes that deal with a specific form of sovereignty reallocation, namely whether a region within a state should gain partial self-rule in the form of internal autonomy or secede outright and either establish a state of its own or merge with its cultural motherland. Thus, SD referendums can relatively straightforwardly be identified on the basis of the Contested Sovereignty dataset by dropping referendums on other types of sovereignty reallocations between territorial centers, such as national unifications. Nevertheless, a number of issues and ambiguities deserve more detailed treatment so as to clarify what cases have and have not been included.

First, it is worth reiterating what instances count as a referendum. As described in chapter 1, this study employs a broad and flexible understanding of the term 'referendum:' a direct popular vote that is organized by official or at least semi-official authorities, such as the authorities of de facto independent entities (Abkhazia and the like). The Contested Sovereignty dataset is based on the same inclusive definition. This broad definition includes several instances that

are sometimes not seen as referendums, including citizen-initiated referendums (e.g. citizen's initiatives), nonbinding referendums, and votes decided in town hall meetings rather than via the ballot box.

However, it is also important to see what is not considered a referendum according to the present definition, and therefore excluded. On the one hand, referendums must necessarily directly relate to an issue. Any type of election to a representative body is therefore excluded, even if elections sometimes amount to something similar to a referendum. For example, Catalonia's 2015 regional election was widely portrayed as a referendum on Catalan independence (BBC News 2015), but since this was not a direct popular vote on the issue of independence, it is not included in the dataset.[1] On the other hand, while the Contested Sovereignty dataset includes direct popular votes that are organized by semi-official entities, such as the 1991 independence referendum organized by the Kosovar Albanian shadow government, it does not cover votes that are organized by purely partisan actors. An example of a vote that falls short of the organizational condition is the 2013 "referendum" on the reunification of South Tyrol with Austria; this vote was organized by a small separatist party, the South-Tyrolean Freedom Movement, in the context of regional parliamentary elections. Conceptually this comes closer to a petition or an opt-in survey than to a referendum. Finally, as outlined in chapter 1, a direct popular vote necessarily requires that an issue is administered to a people. However, whether this condition is fulfilled can be ambiguous, especially in the historical era where limitations on suffrage based on gender, property, or ethnicity were widespread. These cases are handed flexibly by the Contested Sovereignty dataset and included as long as a decision was administered to a significant body of citizens. I follow this practice. An example of a case that does not fulfill this condition and is hence not included is the 1969 "Act of Free Choice" in West Papua, Indonesia. While the Indonesian government described the act as a referendum, only a good 1,000 handpicked elders participated in the decision (see e.g. Broek & Szalay 2001).

Second, the Contested Sovereignty dataset employs a non-absolute understanding of sovereignty and therefore includes SD referendums on internal autonomy. However, it should also be noted that referendums on internal autonomy are only included if the extent of regional

[1]Notably, this extends to cases where the sole purpose of a representative body is to make decisions related to self-rule. For example, the 1863 vote on the merger of the Ionian Islands with Greece would not count as a referendum. While sometimes described as such (e.g. Laponce 2010, Qvortrup 2012, Qvortrup 2014*a*), the Ionian "refrendum" was not a direct popular vote but an election to appoint delegates to a representative body charged with deciding the matter (Goodhart 1971, pp. 132–134, Wambaugh 1920, pp. 122–132).

self-rule at stake crosses a minimal threshold of political significance. Core competencies of the state need to be at stake, for example in the security, economic, social, or cultural realms. Referendums on municipal self-government or referendums on the creation of novel sub-national regions with purely administrative functions would not be included.[2]

Third, while the typical referendum involves just two options—the proposed change and the status quo—other referendums involve more options. The Contested Sovereignty dataset includes such multi-option referendums if at least one of the options involves a sovereignty reallocation. The definition of an SD referendum employed here does not require that SD is the only issue at stake. Thus, I follow this practice analogously and include multi-option referendums as long as at least one of the options implies increased self-rule for a region within a state. Note that multi-option referendums are always counted as a single case, even if they involve more than one type of self-rule (e.g. autonomy and independence).

Fourth, a related issue emerges if sovereignty reallocations are voted on in the context of broader constitutional referendums. The Contested Sovereignty dataset includes such votes as long as the sovereignty reallocation ranges among the primary issues at stake. Take the example of the 1999 referendum on Abkhazia's new constitution. Given that the constitution envisioned Abkhazia as an independent state, the 1999 vote is often described as a referendum on independence (e.g. Scheindlin 2012, Wheatley 2012) and thus included in the Contested Sovereignty dataset, even if a vote on a new constitution by nature always involves a host of other issues, including the polity's institutional structure. As SD referendums need not only involve self-rule according to the definition used in this study, I follow this practice analogously and include 'bundled' referendums, such as Abkhazia's 1999 referendum, as long as increased self-rule is a primary issue.[3]

Fifth, referendums involving cessions deserve special treatment. The concept of a cession refers to transfers of a region from one state to another. According to the definition given in

[2]In addition, the Contested Sovereignty dataset and, by implication, the present list of SD referendums, systematically excludes referendums on territorial realignments between sub-national units. For example, it does not contain the 2013 referendum on a potential merger of several municipalities in the Jura region that have remained with the canton of Bern after the creation of the Jura canton in 1979 (Siroky, Mueller & Hechter 2015). Cases such as the 2013 Jura referendum could be seen as SD referendums, but the stakes involved in them are relatively low by comparison.

[3]However, I deviate from the Contested Sovereignty dataset in a small number of cases that proved too ambiguous upon closer inspection, that is, where it was unclear to what extent increased SD can really be seen as a primary issue in a constitutional referendum. South Ossetia's 2001 constitutional referendum constitutes an example.

chapter 1, referendums dealing with transfers of a territory to its cultural motherland count as SD referendums. However, not all cession referendums involve the transfer of a territory to the cultural motherland. The referendum held in 1986 in the Falkland Islands on a potential merger with Argentina constitutes a good example. The Falklands (or Malvinas) belong to Britain and are primarily inhabited by British settlers, but are also claimed by Argentina. In 1986, the Falkland Islanders staged a referendum so as to demonstrate their almost unanimous opposition to Argentina's claim. While Argentina sees the Falklands as part of its land, few, if any, Falkland Islanders perceive of a potential transfer to Argentina as a merger with their cultural motherland. I excluded cession referendums like the referendum in the Falklands where it is relatively clear that few if any of the inhabitants of the region concerned by the potential change see this as a transfer to their cultural motherland.[4]

Finally, some of the referendums recorded in the Contested Sovereignty dataset involve the question whether a state or a region within a state should gain increased self-rule from a supranational organization, such as the EU. Based on the definition given in chapter 1, these cases do not constitute SD referendums and are hence not included.[5]

4.2.2 Distinguishing between Agreed and Unilateral Self-Determination Referendums and Their Sub-Types

Identifying SD referendums is not sufficient to test the argument advanced in chapter 3 on the link between SD referendums and separatist armed conflict. In addition, we need information on whether SD referendums were launched under agreed terms or unilaterally. The Contested Sovereignty dataset does not include such detailed information, so it was added by the author in an extra round of coding. Given time and resource constraints, it was not feasible to do this for all 360 SD referendums held since 1776. This is also not necessary. In chapters 6 and 7 empirical insights on the determinants of agreed and unilateral SD referendums (a preparatory step needed to identify control variables) and their relationship with separatist armed conflict

[4]All in all, I excluded 14 of the totally 95 sovereignty referendums involving cessions based on this criterion. In particular, I excluded a similar referendum staged in the Falklands in 2013.

[5]In addition to what was mentioned already, I dropped a small number of cases that, while coded in the Contested Sovereignty dataset, are rather ambiguous. The 1970 constitutional referendum held to establish the procedure by which the Jura region could separate from the canton of Bern constitutes an example. While counted as an autonomy referendum in the Contested Sovereignty dataset, the primary focus of this referendum was procedural, and it is thus difficult to see as an SD referendum.

will be sought by combining the data on SD referendums with a novel dataset on noncolonial SD disputes, the SDM-Eurasia dataset. As discussed in more detail in the next chapter, this dataset only covers noncolonial SD disputes in the post-World War Two period (1945–2012).[6] Thus, I only added information on the form of initiation for SD referendums held in the noncolonial context and 1945 onwards. (I included cases held after 2012 up until the end of 2015, even if they will be dropped in subsequent analyses).

The coding of agreement on SD referendums follows the conceptualization outlined in chapter 3. For an SD referendum to count as agreed, the referendum initiation must be uncontested by both primary actors to SD disputes, namely states and SDMs. In other words, states and SDMs must be in prior agreement on the terms of the referendum. Such agreement can be said to exist under a variety of circumstances. The most obvious scenario is if representatives of the state and the SDM engage in formal negotiations and strike a formal settlement that foresees a referendum and outlines its terms. But formal negotiations are not a necessary condition. Agreement may also result from a backdoor deal or even be implicit, that is, occur without prior direct consultation between the parties. The latter scenario emerges when referendums are triggered on the basis of mutually recognized constitutional procedures. If evidence was found that one of the two parties rejected the referendum before it was held, the referendum was coded as unilateral. Clear evidence in this direction may come from calls to boycott the referendum from one of the two sides or if the state declares a separatist-initiated referendum as illegal or unconstitutional. However, things are not always that clear. Coding agreement on the referendum often requires detailed consideration of the stances of states and SDMs to the referendum in the pre-referendum phase, as well as their interactions.

A number of issues therefore deserve more detailed treatment. First, a constitutional basis does not necessarily render a referendum agreed. Agreement requires that the rules of the game are uncontested by both states and SDMs. It cannot be followed from the fact that an SD referendum has a constitutional basis that its rules are uncontested. For example, Croatia's 1991 independence referendum had a legal basis in Croatia's 1990 constitution. However, the legality of this provision was contested by the Yugoslav government (Peters 1995, p. 95), and thus the Croat referendum is coded as unilateral. The same also applies vice versa, that is,

[6]Furthermore, several vital covariates are available only for European and Asian countries, and as a result, much of the analysis will be limited to these countries.

if states initiate SD referendums. For example, Gorbachev's 1991 all-union referendum had a constitutional basis, but was nevertheless unilateral as its main targets, the secessionists in the Baltics and the Caucasus, vehemently opposed the referendum (Peters 1995, pp. 170–172).

Second, coding agreement on the referendum can be tricky due to internal disagreements. Neither states nor SDMs are unitary actors, and in some cases it occurs that some factions agree on the referendum while others do not. If so, I coded referendums as agreed if the most important faction(s) agree on their terms. For example, the 1998 twin referendum on the Belfast Agreement discussed in detail in chapter 3, while opposed by some small splinter groups, had the support of all major factions on both sides, and is therefore coded as agreed (Collin 2015, Loizides 2009). Similarly, the 1999 independence referendum in East Timor is coded as agreed despite opposition by some factions in Indonesia's military, given that it had the backing of president Habibie and his cabinet (and, of course, the separatists in East Timor) (Fernandes 2011, Schulze 2001).

Finally, it is possible that actors change their attitude towards a referendum. For example, the most important Jurassian separatist party, the Rassemblement Jurassien (RJ), was initially opposed to the 1974 referendum on the creation of a separate Jura canton initiated by Bern's cantonal government as it included "non-natives" and as the complex cascade-like mode of voting threatened the unity of the Jura region. However, as it got closer to the referendum, the RJ changed its mind and actively campaigned for a yes vote (Buechi 2012, pp. 190–191). In such cases, I rely on the assessment that is temporally closest to the referendum. Thus, the Jura referendum is coded as agreed.

In addition to determining whether an SD referendum was agreed or unilateral, I also added information on the sub-type of agreed (ratification or arbitration) or unilateral (separatist- or state-sponsored) SD referendum. Again, the coding follows the conceptualization in chapter 3. Thus, agreed referendums are coded as aimed at ratification if they involved a settlement that has previously been negotiated by representatives of the state and the SDM and is supported by both sides (or, if there are internal disagreements, by the most important factions on both sides). By contrast, if there is only agreement between states and SDMs on the referendum but not on the nature of a settlement, the referendum is denoted as an arbitration referendum. Unilateral SD referendums, on the other hand, are grouped into separatist- or state-sponsored referendums depending on whether they are pushed by SDMs or the state, respectively. The information on the sub-types of agreed and unilateral SD referendums will be used in particular

in chapter 6, where the focus shifts to explaining the occurrences of SD referendums, given that different types of agreed and unilateral SD referendums do not always have the same origins.

Several sources were used to code agreement on the referendum and the sub-types. The main source were the short case notes provided in the Center for Direct Democracy's (c2d) online referendum database (Centre for Research on Direct Democracy 2011). However, in many cases the information therein was insufficient and additional case-specific sources had to be consulted, including academic pieces and news sources. In addition, I often consulted Minahan (2002), Hewitt & Cheetham (2000), and the online resources of the Minorities at Risk (MAR) project (Minorities at Risk Project 2009).

4.3 Historical Overview

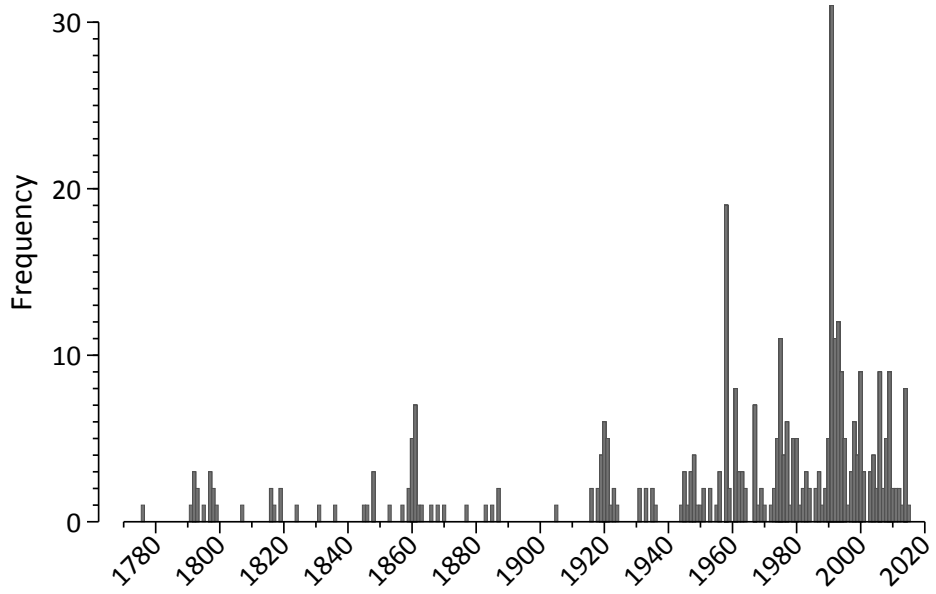
4.3.1 The Global Incidence of Self-Determination Referendums, 1776–2015

I now turn to a descriptive overview of the global experience with SD referendums. The procedure detailed above led to the identification of a total of 360 SD referendums between 1776 and 2015.[7] Figure 4.2 shows their distribution over time. An important initial observation to be made is that the number of SD referendums has increased tremendously over time. In the more than 150 years between the end of the 18th century and 1944, the world saw a total of 86 SD referendum events. By contrast, the 70 years since 1945 saw more than thrice the number of SD referendums: 274, or more than 75% of the total number of SD referendums held since 1776. The last 30 years alone account for more than 160 SD referendums, or 44% of the total number.

These figures suggest that SD referendums have proliferated remarkably, especially since the end of World War Two. That said, it should be noted that these increases are likely to be driven, at least in part, by increases in the prevalence of disputes over self-rule. Drawing on the SDM-Eurasia dataset, the next chapter shows that the number of noncolonial SD disputes has increased markedly in the post-World War Two period. And while similar data is not currently available for noncolonial SD disputes and disputes before 1945, it is reasonable to assume that compared to the post-World War period the number of disputes over self-rule was lower during much of the 18th and 19th centuries. Thus, the increases in the number of

[7]Refer to Appendix A for a list of all SD referendums held since 1776.

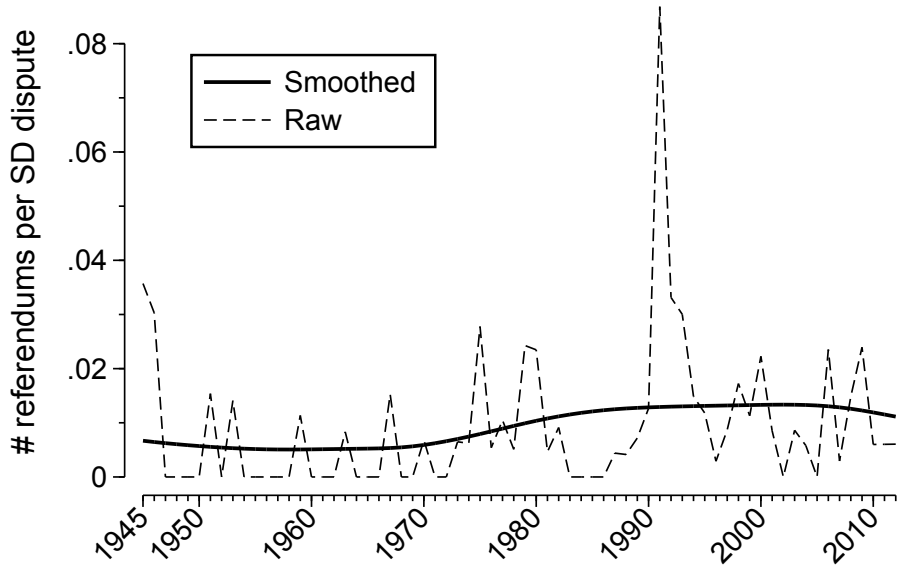
Figure 4.1: SD referendums per calendar year, 1776–2015



SD referendums are partly owed to the fact that there are simply more 'opportunities' for SD referendums. However, this is not the only reason. SD referendums have become more popular even when controlling for the number of SD disputes. Combining the data on SD referendums with data on SD disputes from the SDM-Eurasia dataset, Figure 4.1 plots the average number of SD referendums per SD dispute and calendar year, showing both raw and smoothed figures for better interpretation. As SDM-Eurasia only covers the period between 1945 and 2012, the analysis is limited to these years; further as SDM-Eurasia only codes noncolonial disputes, only noncolonial SD referendums are included to calculate the yearly figures. As becomes evident, the average number of SD referendum per dispute and calendar year has more than doubled since 1945, with their rate picking up significantly starting around 1970. However, it should also be noted that in relation to the total number of SD disputes (and hence opportunities for referendums), SD referendums remain relatively rare sights. In recent years, the average annual number of SD referendums per dispute hovered between 0 and 0.025, suggesting that never more than one out of 40 SD disputes involved a referendum in a given year, and often significantly less. Still, SD referendums have become more popular over time, even when accounting for the raising number of SD disputes.

I now return to the discussion of the temporal distribution of SD referendums. In addition to demonstrating a marked increase in the use of SD referendums, Figure 4.2 also reveals several distinctive peaks, or waves, of SD referendum activity. These waves have generally coincided

Figure 4.2: SD referendums per SD dispute and calendar year, 1945–2012



with major macro-historical processes. The following few paragraphs contain a short overview.

The first SD referendum wave occurred in the wake of the French Revolution, when successive post-revolutionary French governments sought popular legitimation for their territorial acquisitions. Almost all of the cases in this period involved the merger of possessions of France's neighboring states with France. The cycle was initiated with the 1791 referendum in Avignon and Comtat Venaissin, then part of the Papal States. Subsequent years saw similar referendums in Savoy (1792), Nice (1792), and parts of Belgium (1793), among others. With the advent of Napoleon in 1799 the device was abandoned and the first wave of SD referendums came to an end.

As a side note, the 1791 referendum in Avignon and Comtat Venaissin is often said to be where the principle of direct popular participation in decisions on SD (or sovereignty more generally) has originated (see e.g. Goodhart 1971, Laponce 2010, Sussman 2006). However, contrary to prevailing opinion the history of SD referendums goes back at least to 1776, when communities across Massachusets voted on the Declaration of Independence.[8] While the data used here does not extend to the times before the American Revolution, some authors argue

[8]A possible objection may be that the referendum in Massachusets did not involve balloting as understood today, but was conducted in town hall meetings (Maier 1997, pp. 59–61). But then also the 1791 referendum in Avignon and Comtat Venaissin did not involve paper ballots. Instead voting occurred in the form of local meetings where participants were asked to stand in areas designated for union with France or the Papal States, respectively (Goodhart 1971, pp. 100-101).

that it is possible to go back even further to the Middle Ages for evidence of referendums on SD (see e.g. Solière 1901).

Turning back to the temporal patterns in SD referendum activity, the first half of the 19th century did not see much SD referendum activity, though there are some notable exceptions. Maine voted seven times on separating from Massachusetts before attaining separate statehood in 1820. Four of these votes occurred between 1816 and 1819 alone, which accounts for the small peak of activity seen in this period. In 1831 Basel-Country, today a canton in Switzerland, voted to separate from Basel-City and become an independent member of the Old Swiss Confederacy. Finally, Texas voted twice, in 1836 and 1845, on separating from Mexico and joining the US.

A more distinctive wave of SD referendums followed upon the upheavals of 1848. This wave involves several votes held in the context of Italian unification on the merger of territories from Austria-Hungary and the Papal States with the unified Italy, culminating in the 1870 referendum on the accession of Rome to the Italian union. The antecedents of the US Civil War proved to be another fertile ground for SD referendums, with Tennessee, Arkansas, Texas, North Carolina, and Virginia all voting on whether to secede from the US in 1861.[9]

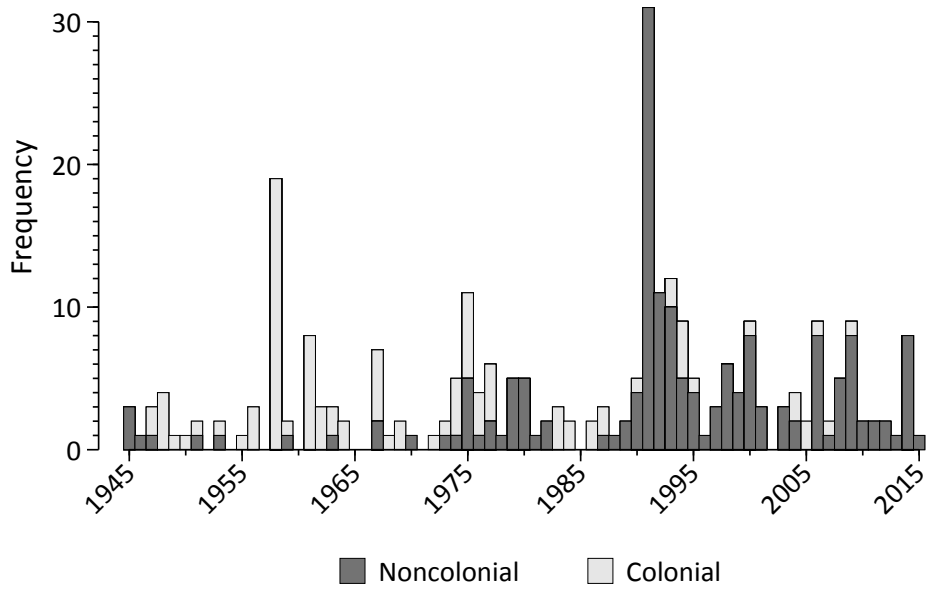
The period after 1870 was again a period with little SD referendum activity.[10] However, another distinctive peak in SD referendum activity emerged after World War One in the context of the post-Versailles settlements and Wilson's famous enunciation of the doctrine of self-determination. The post-World War One wave includes several celebrated referendums that were administered by the League of Nations and dealt with border delimitations between the losing powers and their neighbor states, including the referendums in Schleswig (1920) on the borders between Germany and Denmark, the referendum in Carinthia (1920) on the borders between Austria and the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, and the referendum in Upper Silesia (1921) on Germany's borders with Poland (Bogdanor 1981*a*, Wambaugh 1933).

The remainder of the interwar period was again a period of relative dearth in terms of SD referendum activity, barring a few exceptions including the referendums in Catalonia (1931), the Basque Country (1933), and Galicia (1936) before the Spanish Civil War on their respective Autonomy Statutes. However, the SD referendum soon re-emerged. As noted already, the

[9]In addition, between 1861 and 1863 West Virginia voted thrice on separating from Virginia and forming a separate state.

[10]The few exceptions include the series of referendums on the division of the two Dakotas into a northern and a southern state between 1883 and 1887 and Norway's 1905 referendum on independence from Sweden.

Figure 4.3: Colonial and noncolonial SD referendums, 1945–2015



period after World War Two saw an unprecedented rise in the number of SD referendums. These referendums occurred in a variety of contexts. However, most are related to one of just two macro-historical processes: decolonization and the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe, particularly the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Each is discussed in turn.

Decolonization accounts for a big chunk of the SD referendums held since 1945, especially between 1945 and 1980 (see Figure 4.3). Sure, there have been some SD referendums related to decolonization already before 1945, including the previously mentioned referendum in Massachusetts (1776). However, the number of decolonization-related SD referendums increased rapidly after the end of World War Two, as the consensus took hold that colonial rule has to end. Among the most well-known examples are the referendums on Algerian self-rule in 1961 and 1962. Another notable case is the 1958 vote on France's Fifth Republic constitution. For France's overseas colonies, this vote de facto amounted to a referendum on independence, as de Gaulle had made continued membership in the French Community conditional on approval of the constitution. As each overseas colony had to decide for itself, this is counted as 18 distinct SD referendums, resulting in the peak of activity in 1958.

By the late 1970s, colonialism had largely come to an end, and with it the high tide of decolonization referendums.[11] This does not mean that activity has stopped fully. Several

[11] A total of 76 decolonization-related SD referendums were held between 1945 and 1980. Only 14 were held

territories—typically small islands—continue to have colonial ties with their host states. In several cases, this has also given rise to new referendums. However, decolonization-related SD referendums have become relatively rare sights, and since 1980 they have without exception involved small islands, including Tokelau (2006 and 2007) and the Bermudas (1995).

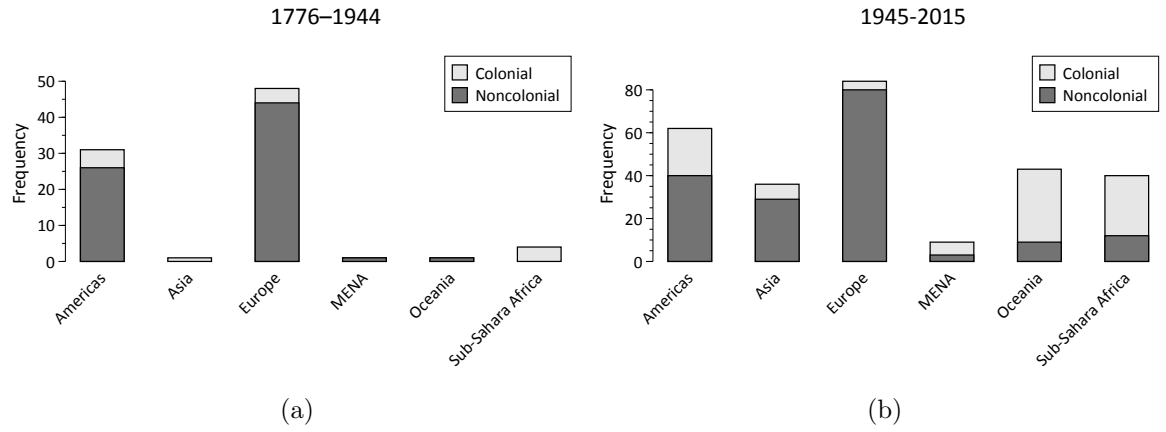
However, beginning in the late 1980s, just as the decolonization wave began to peter out, another geopolitical upheaval unleashed another wave of SD referendums: the fall of Communism in the USSR and Yugoslavia. The post-communist wave is largely responsible for the record number of SD referendums held in the early 1990s, and especially the peak of activity in 1991. The wave includes several well-known SD referendums that have already been discussed previously, including the independence referendums in Slovenia (1990), Croatia (1991), Bosnia (1992), as well as Estonia (1991), Latvia (1991), Lithuania (1991), Georgia (1991), and Gorbachev's 1991 ultimately botched attempt to ensure the continued existence of the Soviet Union via a union-wide referendum. In addition, the post-communist wave also includes a high number of less well-known cases, including the independence referendums in Gagauzia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Kosovo (all held in 1991), as well as a range of autonomy referendums, including Ingushetia (1991) and Tatarstan (1992).

While the majority of all SD referendums held since World War Two are associated to decolonization or the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe, it shall not go unnoticed that there has been substantial SD referendum activity also outside of these two contexts, especially since the 1970s. These referendums account for more than a third of the total activity in this period. Several examples have already been encountered previously, including the referendums held in the 1970s on the creation of the Jura canton, the referendums on autonomy (1979 and 1997) and independence (2014) in Scotland, and the two Quebecois independence referendums (1980 and 1995).

Additional insights on the global patterns of SD referendum activity emerge as we consider regional distributions and the type of self-rule that is voted on. Figure 4.4 shows the frequency of SD referendums across several world regions, distinguishing between the period before and the period after the Second World War as well as between referendums involving the sovereignty of colonial and noncolonial entities. It becomes evident that until 1945, SD referendums were almost entirely a European and American affair. This should not come as a surprise given that,

before 1945 and only 25 after 1980.

Figure 4.4: SD referendums by region and colonial status



(a) (b)

as discussed above, most SD referendums in these initial years were held in the contexts of the French Revolution, Italian unification, the US civil war, and the post-Versailles settlements—and thus in Europe and the Americas or, to be more exact, in Western and Central Europe and Northern America.

In the aftermath of World War Two, the SD referendum has become more globalized. Europe and the Americas continue to be hotbeds for SD referendums, though now with substantial activity also in the eastern parts of Europe and Latin America. But we now find substantial numbers of SD referendums across all world regions, with the only partial exception being Northern Africa and the Middle East (MENA). Of course, the globalization of the SD referendum device after 1945 has much to do with the spate of referendums triggered by the decolonization process. However, it is not the only reason. Especially in Asia, but also in Sub-Sahara Africa and Oceania, there have been a number of noncolonial SD referendums. Examples include the autonomy referendums in Mindanao (1977, 1989, and 2001) and Cordillera (1990 and 1998), and the independence referendums in Nagaland (1951), Namibia (1997), Eritrea (1993), and South Sudan (2011).

Finally, Figure 4.5 reveals interesting shifts in terms of the type of self-rule that is voted on. Before 1945, the typical SD referendum involved the transfer of a territory to its cultural motherland. In particular, this was the dominant type of SD referendum emerging in the context of the French Revolution, Italian unification, and the post-Versailles settlements. After World War Two, both autonomy and independence referendums became much more frequent, with many cases occurring in the context of decolonization and the fall of Communism in Yugoslavia and the USSR. Transfer cases, by contrast, have become less frequent in relative (if not in

Figure 4.5: SD referendums by type of self-rule and colonial status

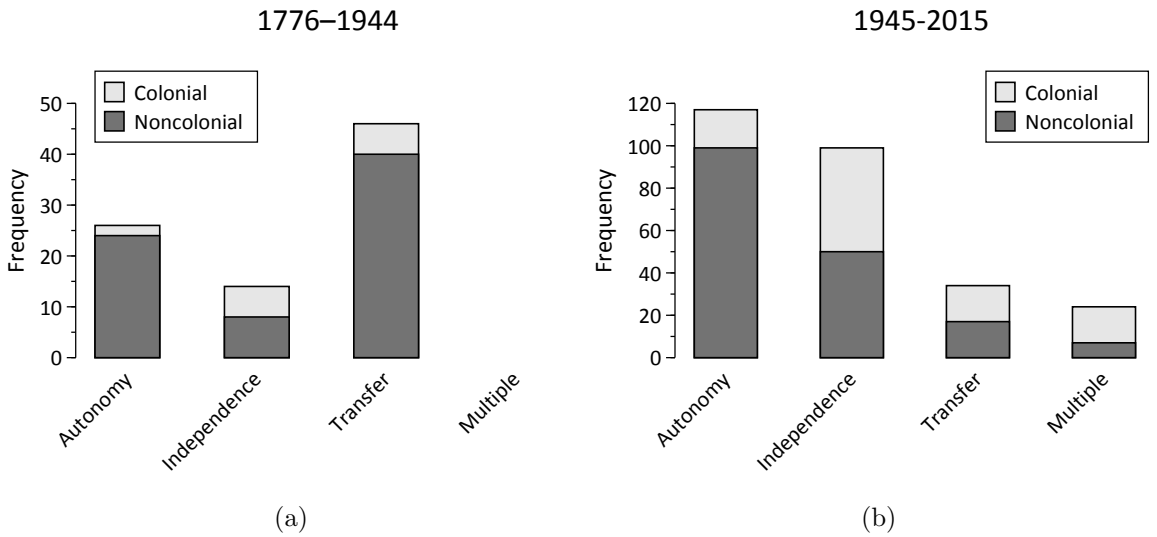


Table 4.1: Frequency of agreed and unilateral SD referendums in noncolonial contexts, 1945–2015

Type of SD referendum	**Freq.**
Agreed	86
Ratification	45
Arbitration	41
Unilateral	87
Separatist-sponsored	72
State-sponsored	15
Total	173

absolute) terms. Finally, the post-World War Two phase saw the emergence of a new type of SD referendum: multi-option referendums involving multiple types of self-rule (for example, both autonomy and independence). Many of these votes involved (former) colonies. A good example is the 1975 referendum in the US Pacific Islands (today Micronesia, Palau, and the Marshall Islands) on its future relations with the US, which involved a range of options including becoming a US Commonwealth, free association with the US, and full independence.

4.3.2 Agreed and Unilateral Self-Determination Referendums

I now turn to a short overview of the global experience with agreed and unilateral SD referendums. For the reasons stated above, this data does not include SD referendums that deal with the status of colonial entities and is limited to the post-World War Two phase. The total number of SD referendums included is 173. Table 4.1 shows the breakdown according to

whether these referendums were agreed or not. As becomes evident, half of the 173 cases have been initiated under agreed terms (86), whereas the other half of SD referendums has been unilaterally initiated (87). Further disaggregation by the sub-types of agreed and unilateral SD referendums suggests that slightly more than half of the agreed referendums involved the ratification of a previously negotiated settlement between states and SDMs (45), whereas the remaining 41 cases were aimed at arbitration between states and SDMs. Regarding unilateral SD referendums, we see that state-sponsored unilateral SD referendums are relatively rare (15 cases), whereas there have been 72 separatist-sponsored unilateral referendums.

Further interesting insights emerge as we sort the cases according to the type of self-rule that is voted on (see Table 4.2). As becomes clear, most agreed SD referendums involve the question of increased autonomy (72%). This applies in particular to ratification referendums; 38 of the 45 cases involved an autonomy settlement, or 84% of all ratification referendums. These low figures, especially the one for ratification referendums, have to be seen in the light of the high value attached by states to their territorial integrity (see chapters 3 and 6). Ratification referendums presuppose a mutually agreed settlement, and given the importance states attach to territory, they are unlikely to agree to a settlement that involves outright secession. Among the rare exceptions are the independence referendums in Turkmenistan (1991) and Eritrea (1993). If states agree to a referendum on secession, then typically only as a form of arbitration in which they advocate a no vote. 17 of the totally 23 agreed secession referendums were arbitration referendums (in addition to referendums on independence, this figure includes transfer cases and referendums involving multiple types of self-rule, which all involved independence as an option). Examples include the independence referendums in Quebec (1980 and 1995), Montenegro (2006), South Sudan (2011), and Scotland (2014).[12]

By contrast, outright secession constitutes a much more frequent referendum issue in the case of unilaterally initiated SD referendum: 50 out of the totally 87 cases involved outright secession, or 57%. In particular, separatists often resort to unilateral referendums so as to push a maximalist claims for outright secession (43 cases). Examples include the independence referendums held in Slovenia (1990), Croatia (1991), Bosnia (1992), and the Baltics (1991). However, not all SD referendums that were unilaterally initiated by separatists deal with outright seces-

[12]That said, the majority of arbitration referendums involve autonomy (24 out of 45 cases). Examples include the 1974 referendum in the Swiss Jura and the 2006 referendum in Bolivia on departmental autonomy.

Table 4.2: Type of self-rule at stake in agreed and unilateral SD referendums, only noncolonial cases, 1945–2015

	Type of self-rule at stake				
Type of SD referendum	**Autonomy**	**Independence**	**Transfer**	**Multiple**	**Total**
Agreed	62	17	1	6	86
Ratification	38	6	1	0	45
Arbitration	24	11	0	6	41
Unilateral	37	33	16	1	87
Separatist-sponsored	29	27	15	1	72
State-sponsored	8	6	1	0	15

sion. A substantial minority of the cases (29, or 40%) involve internal autonomy. This includes the unilateral autonomy referendums staged by the Albanian minority in Macedonia in 1992 and the referendum staged in Russia's Tatarstan republic in the same year.

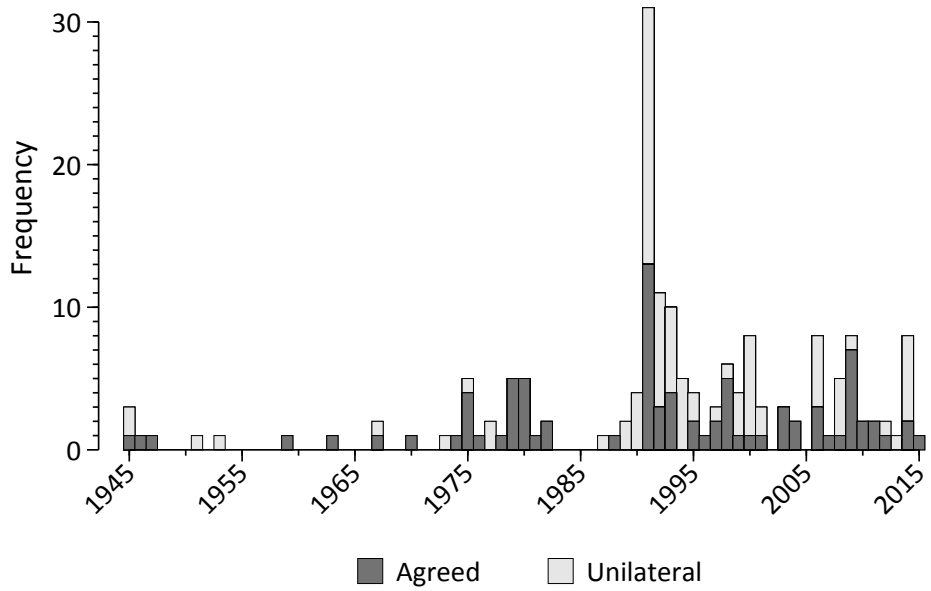
In the few cases where states have resorted to unilateral SD referendums, this also frequently involved outright secession (7 of the 15 cases). The typical scenario here is that states use the referendum device to fight off a looming threat of secession by delegitimizing the secessionists' claim. The Border Poll in Northern Ireland (1973) constitutes a good example.[13] In the remaining 8 cases, state-sponsored unilateral SD referendums involved autonomy. This includes both cases in which the state sought to push through a minimal form of accommodation that is rejected by the separatists (e.g. Mindanao 1977) and cases in which the state sought to delegitimize a claim to autonomy by showcasing low popular support (e.g. Karachay-Cherkessia 1992).[14]

Next, we take a look at the temporal and spatial distribution of agreed and unilateral SD referendums. Figure 4.6 shows the number of noncolonial SD referendums per calendar year, disaggregated by consensual or unilateral initiation. Again, we see that there have been relatively few noncolonial SD referendums in the first few decades after World War Two (the majority of the cases in this period were related to decolonization; see above). Several additional insights emerge. First, there has been a more or less constant stream of agreed SD referendums since the early or mid 1970s. By contrast, there were only relatively few unilateral SD referendums

[13] In one of the cases, the 1977 referendum on independence for South-West Africa (today's Namibia), the state or, to be more exact, South Africa's Apartheid government used a unilateral referendum to legitimize a form of independence to its own liking (see chapter 3).

[14] See chapter 3 for an extended discussion of the different reasons why states resort to unilateral SD referendums.

Figure 4.6: Agreed and unilateral SD referendums per calendar year, only noncolonial cases, 1945–2015

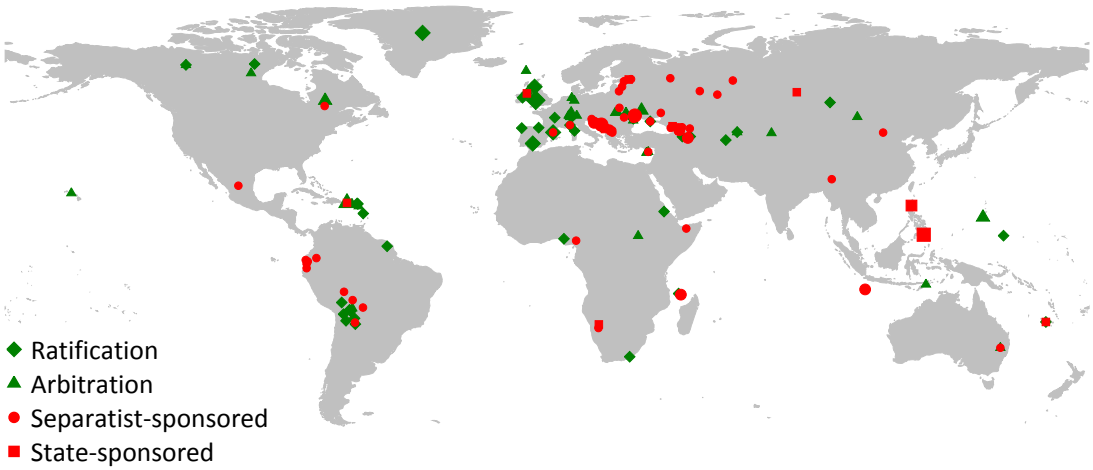


until the late 1980s, when their number exploded mainly as a result of the geopolitical upheavals triggered by the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe. As many as 45 unilateral SD referendums were held between 1989 and 1995, or more than half of the worldwide total of cases since 1945 (87). Notably, 39 of these 45 cases were held in the former Yugoslavia, the former USSR, and their successor states, including 34 unilateral SD referendums initiated by separatists and five initiated by states. Since the mid-1990s we observe a relatively constant ebb and flow of unilateral SD referendums.

Finally, Figure 4.7 shows the geographic location of agreed and unilateral SD referendums (and their sub-types) using country or region centroids for national and subnational SD referendums, respectively.[15] As becomes evident, there is a notable concentration of unilateral SD referendums in Eastern Europe and parts of Central Asia, mainly due to the wave of unilateral SD referendums that swept through the former Yugoslavia and the former USSR between 1989 and 1995. In addition, we observe a notable concentration of agreed SD referendums in Western Europe, in particular Spain, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland. However, despite these concentrations, the map also reveals that both agreed and unilateral SD referendums really constitute global phenomena, with substantial numbers of cases across almost all world regions.

[15]The size of the markers is proportional to the number of cases held at a specific location. In some cases, such as Crimea, multiple referendums of the same type were held at the same geographic location.

Figure 4.7: Geographic location of agreed and unilateral SD referendums, only noncolonial cases, 1945–2015

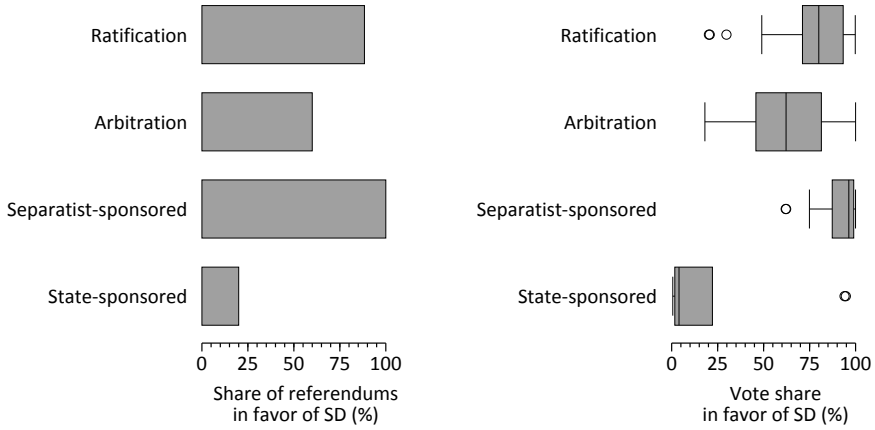


4.3.3 Self-Determination Referendum Outcomes

Next we take a look at the outcomes of SD referendums or, to be more specific, a look at the outcomes of the different sub-types of agreed and unilateral SD referendums. This will serve as a plausibility check of the typology introduced in chapter 3, given that theory would suggest that the distinction between ratification, arbitration, separatist-sponsored, and state-sponsored referendums is visible also in their outcomes. For example, chapter 3 argued that arbitration referendums tend to be more contested than ratification referendums. The reason was that in the former case both states and SDMs defend their negotiated settlement and thus are on the same side of the referendum campaign, whereas arbitration referendums usually directly pit SDMs against agents of the state in fiercely contested battles. A look at the outcomes of these referendums allows to check this assumption.

Before continuing it is important to note that the outcomes of SD referendums do not, of course, always reflect the 'true' will of the people. SD referendums sometimes occur in undemocratic contexts and are not necessarily free and fair. Some are outright rigged. Though this is difficult to prove, this is likely to apply in particular to SD referendums that are initiated unilaterally, as these tend to involve the highest degree of political instrumentality. The SD referendums held recently in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, which likely featured significant ballot stuffing, constitute examples (Peters 2015). However, for the present purposes, whether or not referendums are rigged is not a primary concern. The claims made in chapter 3 concerning the differential outcomes of ratification, arbitration, separatist-sponsored, and state-sponsored referendums should apply despite or to some extent even because of the potential for these

Figure 4.8: SD referendum outcomes, only noncolonial cases, 1945–2015



referendums to be rigged. Take the example of separatist-sponsored referendums. As argued in chapter 3, these referendums are likely to be manipulated in ways that ensure a separatist victory. In particular, the right to vote is likely to be limited to the separatists' coethnics. Vote manipulation may however also take the form of ballot stuffing and miscounting votes. Irrespectively of the method(s), we should see that separatist-sponsored unilateral SD referendums generally pass, and do so by high margins.

For the comparison of referendum outcomes I recoded all cases so that i) a referendum is considered as passed if it came out in favor of increased self-rule[16] and that ii) the yes share indicates the number of voters agreeing with increased self-rule. This is necessary because a yes vote does not always imply increased self-rule. For example, in Gorbachev's 1991 all-union referendum a yes vote implied agreement to the status quo (i.e. the preservation of the union). Figure 4.8 shows the results for all noncolonial SD referendums since 1945 while distinguishing between ratification, arbitration, separatist-sponsored, and state-sponsored referendums.[17]

The figure provides initial support to the categorization proposed in chapter 3. As the left panel shows, SD referendums generally pass (82% of the referendums came out in favor of increased self-rule when all types are combined). But there are important differences across

[16]Considering, where applicable, qualified majority requirements.

[17]A total of nine referendums have been excluded where it is undefined whether increased self-rule passed or not as the voting took place in different regions and each region decided for itself. Furthermore, if there are multiple options implying increased self-rule in addition to a status quo option,the yes shares for all these options are combined.

the different types of SD referendums that, crucially, align with the theoretical claims made in chapter 3. Specifically, as suggested in chapter 3 we see that the rate of referendums turning out in favor of increased SD is much higher for ratification referendums (88%) compared to arbitration referendums (60%). Ratification referendums also tend to have higher vote shares in favor of self-rule (77% versus 63%; see the right panel). As argued in chapter 3, ratification referendums thus often constitute rubber-stamp affairs, whereas there is more variability regarding the outcome of arbitration referendums.[18]

Even starker differences emerge for the two types of unilateral SD referendums. The theory advanced in chapter 3 would suggest that separatist-sponsored unilateral SD referendums usually come out in favor of self-rule (see section 3.4.3). In line with this, the figure shows that the separatists managed to win *all* referendums they unilaterally initiated (!). The separatists also usually won these referendums by very healthy margins (the average level of popular agreement with increased self-rule is 92%). In stark contrast, only a minority of the unilateral SD referendums initiated by states came out in favor of more self-rule, and many feature vote shares in favor of self-rule in the low double or even in the single digits. The reason is that the majority of these referendums are initiated by states with the explicit goal of legitimating the status quo. However, as argued in chapter 3, status quo legitimation is not the only possible strategy states may pursue with unilateral SD referendums. They may also seek to push through a minimal form of accommodation that is rejected by the separatists. That this strategy can be successful is suggested by cases such as the 1977 whites-only referendum in South-West Africa (today: Namibia), in which 95% of white voters agreed to the South African proposal of an 'independent' Namibia ruled by whites and under South African influence. The Namibian referendum, together with a similar 2006 referendum initiated by the Georgian government to seek legitimacy for an autonomy regime in South Ossetia, is responsible for the outliers in terms of the vote share in favor of self-rule, plotted as a small circle in the right panel of Figure 4.8.[19]

[18]The referendums in Scotland (1979), Wales (1979), and Corsica (2003) range among the few ratification referendums that have failed.

[19]There are several additional examples of states launching SD referendums unilaterally to legitimize a minimal form of territorial accommodation, but these are excluded from the current analysis because different regions were involved with each region deciding for itself (see footnote 17). The 1977 referendum in Mindanao, in which each of Mindanao's 13 provinces had to decide for itself whether it wants to become part of the autonomous entity proposed by dictator Marcos but rejected by the Moro separatists, constitutes an example.

4.4 Summary

This chapter reviewed the data on SD referendums. It was described how the universe of SD referendums was established by drawing data from the Contested Sovereignty dataset, a novel dataset that records the worldwide experience with referendums on self-determination and other sovereignty issues. Further, we have seen how, for a sample covering the whole post-World War Two experience with SD referendums in noncolonial contexts, information was added on whether or not SD referendums were held under agreed terms, but also on the type of agreed and unilateral SD referendums.

In an exploratory analysis based on this data, we have seen that a very considerable number of SD referendums have been held between 1776 and 2015, but also that their rate of deployment has increased rapidly over time. In addition, I identified several waves of SD referendum activity, waves that have generally coincided with major macro-historical processes including the French Revolution, the post-Versailles settlements, and the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe. I have also noted several shifts over time regarding the location of SD referendums and the referendum issues, including a trend towards the globalization of the SD referendum and away from referendums on transfers of territory to their cultural motherland.

In a further step, the chapter explored the global experience with agreed and unilateral SD referendums, focusing on noncolonial cases held after World War Two. We have seen that agreed and unilateral SD referendums are almost exactly equally prevalent, but also that unilateral SD referendums initiated by states constitute a rare sight. Further, we have seen that unilateral SD referendums often involve outright secession whereas agreed SD referendums—especially those aimed at the ratification of settlements—tend to deal with autonomy. Also, we noted a high concentration of agreed SD referendums in Western Europe whereas a significant share of all unilateral SD referendums occurred in the context of the fall of Communism in the former USSR and the former Yugoslavia.

Finally, this chapter looked at the outcomes SD referendums. This served as a plausibility check for several theoretical assumptions made in chapter 3. The results were generally supportive. Specifically, we have seen that as predicted, arbitration referendums are more contested than ratification referendums. Further, all SD referendums that were initiated by separatists came out in favor of increased self-rule, and usually by high margins, whereas the picture is more mixed for state-sponsored unilateral SD referendums, with the outcomes depending on

the strategic motives of the state leaders that are behind them.

Chapter 5

New Data on Self-Determination Disputes

5.1 Introduction

The data on SD referendums introduced in the previous chapter constitutes an important prerequisite for the empirical tasks that lie before us. However, it is evidently not going to be sufficient. In this chapter, I introduce the second major backbone of the empirical analyses presented in subsequent chapters: the SDM-Eurasia dataset.

SDM-Eurasia constitutes a novel dataset on noncolonial disputes over self-rule between 1945 and 2012. This dataset has resulted from a multi-year collaboration between Nicholas Sambanis, Andreas Schädel, and the author (Sambanis, Germann & Schädel 2016, Germann, Sambanis & Schädel 2016), and it was designed with the explicit aim of facilitating empirical analyses of dynamic SD dispute outcomes, such as SD referendums and separatist armed conflict. As a result, it is highly suited to the empirical tasks we face in chapters 6 and 7.

This chapter reviews the SDM-Eurasia data. There are two main goals. First, to describe what this data contains, how it was collected, and how it improves upon existing attempts to code SD disputes. Several additional sources of data will be used in chapters 6 and 7, but many of them are well-known. The SDM-Eurasia dataset constitutes a novel contribution and thus deserves a proper introduction. Second, to provide, on the basis of SDM-Eurasia, a survey of the contemporary politics of SD. Through a series of charts and discussions of the data, this chapter will substantiate the proliferation of noncolonial SD disputes since World War Two, thus underlining the high policy relevance of self-rule disputes. In addition, I examine a number

of questions including: How frequently do SD disputes turn violent? Do SDMs almost always make radical claims for outright secession, or are moderate claims or autonomy more common? And how successful are SDMs in reaching their goals? In sum, this chapter prepares the ground for the two subsequent chapters, where the causes and consequences of SD referendums will be scrutinized empirically on the basis of the SDM-Eurasia dataset.

5.2 Data with Global Coverage

The SDM-Eurasia dataset comes in two parts. The first part has global coverage and identifies all noncolonial SD disputes between 1945 and 2012, pinpoints their start and end dates, and includes information on periods of armed conflict between states and SDMs. This part is reviewed here. The second part includes more detailed information on several pertinent factors associated with separatism. Unlike the first part, these more detailed measures are available only for a subset of the cases. The second part is reviewed in the next section.

I begin with a short discussion of the coding rules and sources used to construct the global data on noncolonial SD disputes. This discussion is rather technical and readers who are not interested in coding issues may want to move directly to the next section, where descriptives on the global incidence of SD disputes are discussed. Finally, in the third part I compare the SDM-Eurasia dataset to other, extant attempts to code SD disputes. I will show that these pre-existing datasets suffer from a crucial limitation: they include only a small and biased sample of the universe of SD disputes, thus raising the danger of selection bias. The SDM-Eurasia dataset offers much-improved coverage, thus minimizing case selection bias.

5.2.1 Coding Rules and Sources

Identifying Noncolonial Self-Determination Disputes

The SDM-Eurasia dataset identifies all noncolonial SD disputes between 1945 and 2012. The definition of an SD dispute employed in the SDM-Eurasia dataset is compatible with the present definition discussed in chapter 3. Thus, there needs to be a conflict between an SDM and its host state over self-rule. An SDM is defined as constituted by one or more political organizations that are connected to an ethnic group and claim increased self-rule for a region within a state. In line with the present definition of self-rule, the SDM-Eurasia dataset includes both disputes over more limited forms of self-rule, such as economic or political autonomy, and disputes over

outright secession.

In order to be included in the dataset, the self-rule claimants must be attached to an ethnic group. However, in keeping with the present definition of ethnicity discussed in chapter 3, SDM-Eurasia's understanding of ethnicity is broad and explicitly includes regional identities. Thus, in addition to SD disputes involving 'standard' ethnic groups defined over linguistic, religious, or racial markers, such as the Basques in Spain or the Southerners in Sudan, the SDM-Eurasia dataset includes SD disputes involving groups that are mainly regionally defined, such as the Crimean Russians in Ukraine or the Jurassians in Switzerland.[1]

Crucially, the SDM-Eurasia dataset only includes disputes that involve at least a limited level of mobilization for self-rule. There must be evidence of activity by a political party, cultural organization, armed rebel group, or protest movement. It does not matter what form the mobilization for self-rule takes; it may be institutional (e.g. running for office) or extrainstitutional (e.g. protests or violence). However, no SD dispute is coded in the absence of mobilization for self-rule, even if there is widespread separatist sentiment. For example, no SD dispute is coded between the Bosniaks and Yugoslavia before 1990, the year the first openly separatist organization was founded (the Party of Democratic Action or SDA), even though separatist sentiment was clearly present beforehand.

Some additional examples of what the SDM-Eurasia dataset does *not* include will be useful. Movements that demand increased policy autonomy from supranational organizations, such as the BREXIT movement, are not coded. SD disputes as defined in the SDM-Eurasia dataset (and here) revolve around the question whether a region within a state should gain increased self-rule, and not whether a state as a whole should gain more self-rule. For the same reason, movements that aim at the merger of two or more existing states are not coded. Examples include the pan-African movement or the enosis movement in Cyprus. Furthermore, disputes that involve a region claiming that its current level of self-rule should be retained are also not coded (contrary e.g. to Hale 2008, p. 3). The claim must be for increased self-rule, and so movements such as the one in post-independence Moldova that aimed at the preservation of national independence and opposition to unification with Romania are excluded. Fringe movements or disputes over

[1]It should be added that members of the same ethnic group sometimes raise self-rule claims against multiple states. This may occur if a group's settlement area spans multiple countries. The Kurds, for example, have made self-rule claims against Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Azerbaijan, and Iran. However, while it is the same ethnic group, these claims are targeted against different states. Thus, the SDM-Eurasia dataset treats them as separate cases.

very limited forms of self-rule that do not cross a minimal level of political significance are also not coded. In order to be included, autonomy claims must exceed the normal 'day-to-day' politics and involve a significant redefinition of the state's institutional set-up, such as a territorial redefinition in a federal state or the transfer of significant competencies to a region, such as autonomy over natural resources. Finally, the SDM-Eurasia dataset excludes disputes involving colonies. This is not a matter of definition—disputes between states and colonies over self-rule do constitute SD disputes according to the definition—but a choice made in the light of the decreasing relevance of colonial SD disputes and so as to render data collection feasible.

Several sources were used for the identification of SD disputes. Existing datasets on SD disputes constituted a good point of departure, in particular the Minorities at Risk dataset (MAR) (Gurr 1993, Gurr 2000*c*, Minorities at Risk Project 2009) and the Peace and Conflicts reports published by the Center of International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM) (Marshall & Gurr 2003, Marshall & Gurr 2005, Hewitt, Wilkenfeld & Gurr 2008). However, these datasets are incomplete (see below). A number of additional sources were consulted so as to improve coverage and pinpoint start and end dates. First, many missing cases could be identified on the basis of three encyclopedic sources dealing with ethnic separatism (Hewitt & Cheetham 2000, Minahan 1996, Minahan 2002). Another helpful source was the the World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples (Minority Rights Group International 2015). Among the additional sources consulted range Degenhardt (1988), material provided by the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), and the UCDP/PRIO database of armed conflicts (Gleditsch et al. 2002, Themnér & Wallensteen 2014). Further, news archives were searched for keywords including self-determination, self-governance, self-rule, regionalism, separatism, and secessionism. Finally, coders consulted a wealth of region- and country-specific academic literature.

For all SD disputes thus identified, the SDM-Eurasia dataset records start and end dates, defined as the first year in which an SDM actively claimed self-rule against a host state and the year in which an SDM ceased to exist or abandoned its demand for increased self-rule, respectively. In addition to cases where movements simply stop to exist, SD disputes may also end due to a successful secession by the claimant or due to a country break up that leads to a change in the claimant's host state affiliation. For example, the SD dispute involving the Hungarians in Czechoslovakia ends in 1992 because Czechoslovakia ceased to exist. If the same group continues to claim self-rule under the new host state, this is counted as a new challenge.

For example, a new SD dispute involving the Hungarians from the former Czechoslovakia is coded under the header of the independent Slovakia.

However, the end dates of SD disputes are not always obvious. SD disputes may peter out gradually. Further, periods of highly visible mobilization may be interrupted by periods with very limited activity that is difficult to detect in the source materials. Due to this, the SDM-Eurasia dataset applies a "ten years of inactivity rule", meaning that in the absence of clear evidence that a dispute stopped, an end is only coded if no evidence could be found of organized separatist activity for ten years. A decade constitutes a long time frame and this likely means that the dataset includes some SD disputes that in reality have stopped. However, the ten years rule errs on the side of caution so as not to omit SD disputes involving movements that in fact are simply keeping a low profile, say due to repression, or are in their early stages.

If a movement ends and then restarts, the SDM-Eurasia dataset codes a second period of activity. For example, SDM-Eurasia includes two phases of activity for the Estonians in the former USSR, with the first period of activity corresponding to the partisan resistance campaign in the immediate post-World War Two phase (ending in 1956) and the second starting in 1987 in the context of glasnost and perestroika, ending with Estonia's independence (1991). If there are two phases of activity, the second period is however not counted as a new, independent SD dispute, but considered part of the same discontinuous SD dispute. No dispute in the dataset has more than two phases of activity, though this is in principle possible. Movements which were ongoing as of 2012, the last year that is covered, are denoted as "ongoing."

Separatist Armed Conflict

In addition to identifying noncolonial SD disputes between 1945 and 2012, the SDM-Eurasia dataset also pinpoints whether and, if yes, in what years these disputes involved separatist armed conflict. This data will be used extensively in the empirical chapters, in particular in chapter 7, which scrutinizes the empirical link between agreed and unilateral SD referendums and separatist armed conflict.

In line with the definition given in chapter 1, SDM-Eurasia defines separatist armed conflict as a form of intra-state violent conflict that pits rebels associated with an SDM against the state. Critically, separatist armed conflicts must by definition be fought over self-rule. That is, autonomy or secession must range among the rebels' goals, even if it needs not be the rebels' only goal. Furthermore, the violence must be both lethal and reciprocal; that is, there must be

casualties on both the government and the rebel side.

This definition of separatist armed conflict is relatively inclusive. In particular, it includes both instances of "high-intensity" civil wars with thousands of casualties and more limited, "low-intensity" conflicts that caused significantly fewer deaths.[2] SDM-Eurasia does not, notably, require an explicit minimum number of casualties for an instance to count as a separatist armed conflict. The 25 battle-deaths threshold used in the Uppsala dataset on armed conflict (Gleditsch et al. 2002) can be seen as a rough-patch point of orientation. However, several of the sources used to identify periods of separatist armed conflict (see below) do not provide exact casualty estimates, and it is possible that they include some conflicts below the 25 battle-deaths marker.

Several sources were used to code SDM-Eurasia's separatist armed conflict indicator, including Doyle & Sambanis's (2006) data on civil wars, as updated in Sambanis & Schulhofer-Wohl (2015), the Uppsala armed conflict dataset (Gleditsch et al. 2002, Themnér & Wallensteen 2014), the Peace and Conflict reports by the Center of International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM) (in particular Marshall & Gurr 2003, Hewitt, Wilkenfeld & Gurr 2008), and Minorities at Risk (MAR) (Minorities at Risk Project 2009).[3] In addition, news reports and case study evidence were consulted.

5.2.2 Descriptive Overview

The Global Incidence of Self-Determination Disputes

Based on the coding rules and sources discussed above, the SDM-Eurasia dataset identifies a total of 470 SD disputes in 120 countries.[4] Recall that these figures only include noncolonial SD disputes and are limited to the period from 1945 until 2012. Table 5.1 gives some additional summary statistics.

A closer look at temporal distributions reveals a number of interesting insights. Figure 5.1 plots the number of active noncolonial SD disputes by calendar year from 1945 to 2012. As

[2]The SDM-Eurasia dataset allows to distinguish between low-intensity and high-intensity separatist armed conflicts.

[3]In the case of MAR, a separatist armed conflict was coded if there was a score of three or higher on the anti-government rebellion scale, with the exception of a score of three that solely corresponds to sovereignty declarations, and if the rebellion involved separatist aims.

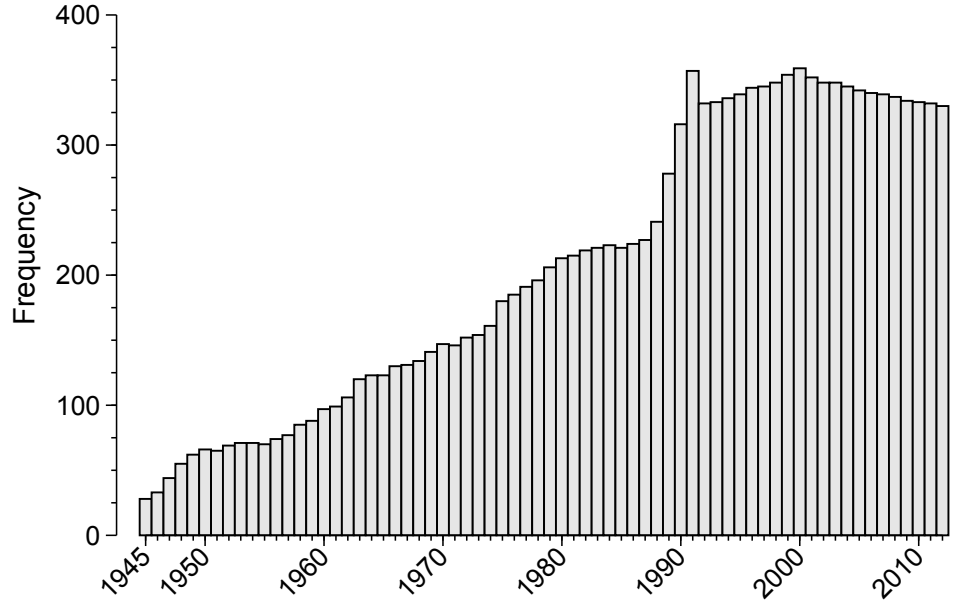
[4]Refer to Appendix B for a list of all SD disputes.

Table 5.1: Noncolonial SD dispute activity, 1945–2012

SD disputes	470
Countries	120
Ongoing SD disputes (2012)	327
SD disputes with discontinuous activity	36
Average duration of SD disputes (years)	29.8

becomes clear, the number of noncolonial SD disputes has proliferated remarkably since the end of World War Two. While 1945 had a mere 28 such disputes, this figure increased steadily in subsequent years to 43 in 1950, 59 in 1960, 91 in 1970, and 121 in 1980. A massive spike occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s, with the number of SD disputes increasing from 227 in 1987 to 357 in 1991. Since then, the number of active SD disputes has stabilized, with a small downward trend since the year 2000. Notably, the increase in noncolonial SD dispute activity has been accompanied by notable increases in the use of SD referendums in these contexts, as seen in the previous chapter.

Figure 5.1: Number of SD disputes per calendar year, 1945–2012



Further interesting insights emerge as we combine the temporal with the spatial dimension. Figure 5.2 shows choropleth world maps with countries shaded in proportion to the number of active SD disputes they contain in four selected years (1948, 1970, 1991, and 2012).[5] Perhaps

[5]Colonies are left blank. The maps were drawn using the cshapes package (Weidmann, Kuse & Gleditsch 2010, Weidmann & Gleditsch 2010).

the most striking observation is the explosion of SD dispute activity in the former USSR in the run-up to the collapse of Communist rule in 1991. While the former USSR had a mere 5 active SD disputes in 1985, a whopping 71 were active in 1991, the highest number recorded for a single country in a single year. Notably, this explosion of activity in the former USSR is largely responsible for the the spike in global SD dispute activity in the late 1980s and early 1990s observed above. Further, as shown in the previous chapter the wave of SD dispute activity in the former USSR has also led to a record number of SD referendums in the early 1990s. Some of the SD disputes born under the crumbling Soviet regime have since ended, including several that have led to independent statehood, including the conflicts involving the Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, and the Georgians. However, many others have continued. By 2012, Russia still had 29 active SD disputes, and several other of the USSR's successor states also continue to see SD dispute activity, including Georgia and Ukraine with 4 SD disputes each and Moldova with 2.

The former USSR and its successor states are not the only hotbed of separatism. The former Yugoslavia, where the number of active SD disputes increased from just one in 1985 (the dispute over Kosovo) to as many as 13 in 1991, contributes to the spike of activity observed in the late 1980s and early 1990s (which, like the explosion of movements in the former USSR, also led to a fair share of SD referendums). Southern and Eastern Asia has significant SD dispute activity, in particular India (22 SD disputes in 2012, up from 9 in 1948) and Myanmar (13 in 2012, up from 7 in 1948). Western Europe constitutes another hotbed, in particular Italy (16 in 2012, up from 7 in 1948), Spain (11 in 2012, up from 1), and France (13 in 2012, up from 1), though many of France's SD disputes involve groups located in overseas entities, such as Guadeloupe. Finally, largely due to a wave of mobilization by indigenous groups across the continent, the Americas experienced a notable increase in the number of SD disputes, with as many as 60 active disputes in 2012, up from just 6 in the late 1940s. With 15 active SD disputes in 2012 (up from just one in 1948), the US constitutes the most notable example, followed by Canada (7, up from 1). However, several Latin American countries have also experienced increases, including Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru (all 3 in 2012, up from 0 in the late 1940s).

SD disputes constitute a less prevalent feature of several other regions, including Sub-Saharan Africa and Northern Africa and the Middle East (MENA). However, at the same time separatism is not completely absent from these regions. Nigeria, Ethiopia, South Africa, Uganda, Iran, and Iraq all have substantial numbers of SD disputes. While more prevalent in

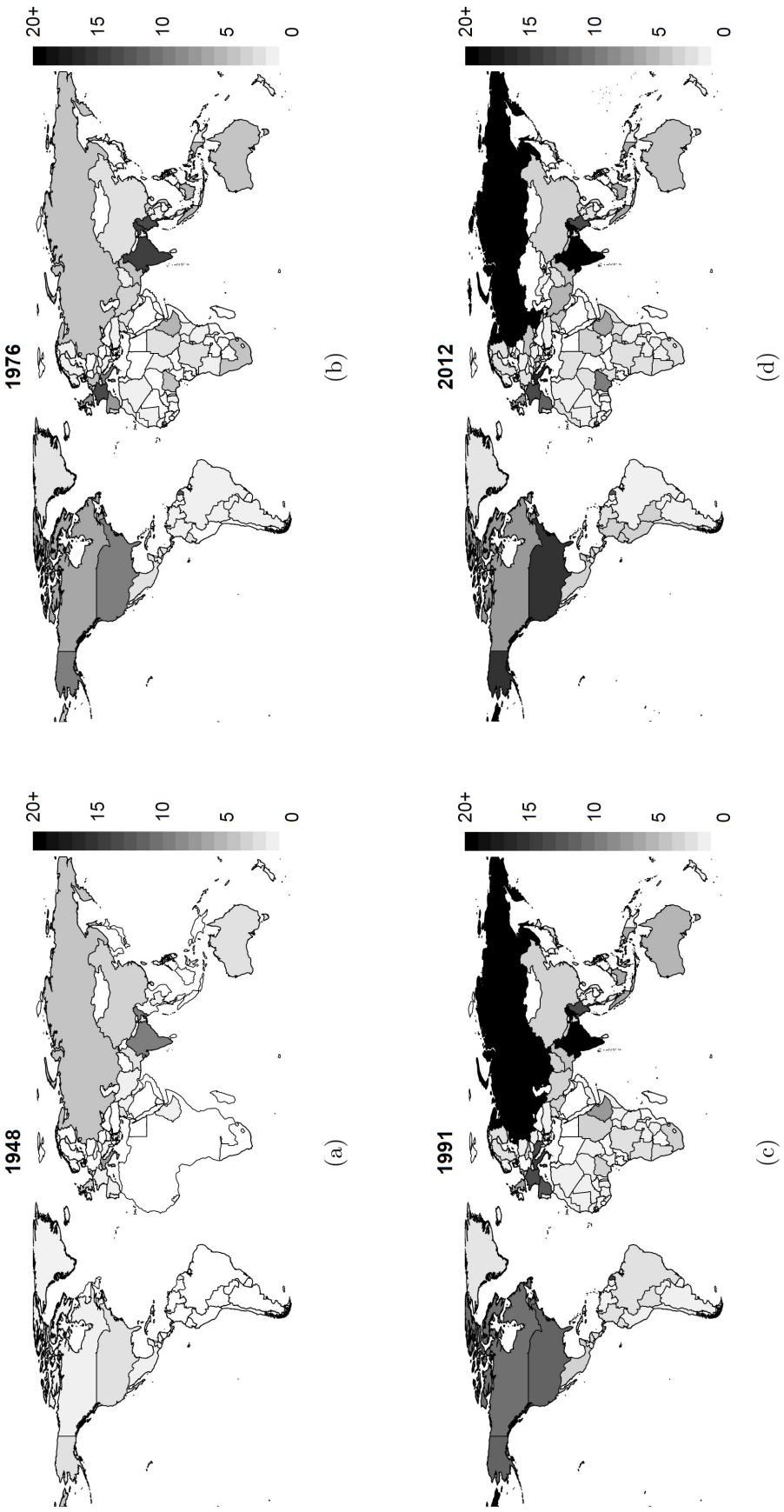
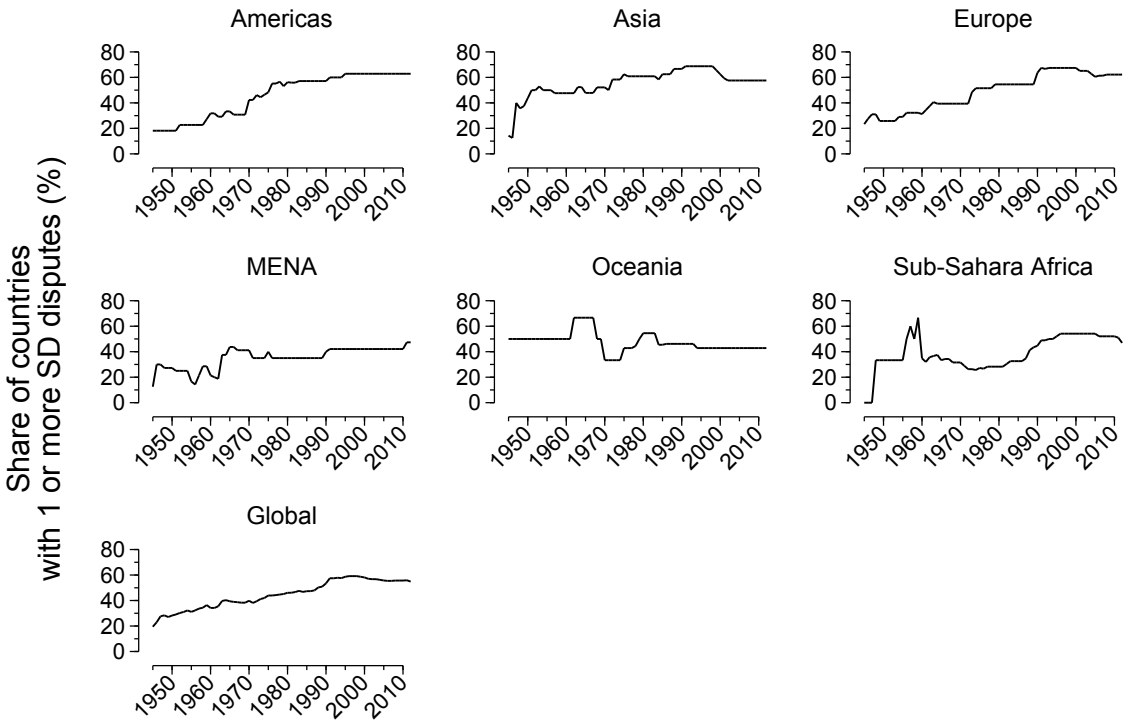


Figure 5.2: Number of SD disputes by countries in selected years

Figure 5.3: Share of countries with at least one SD dispute by world regions



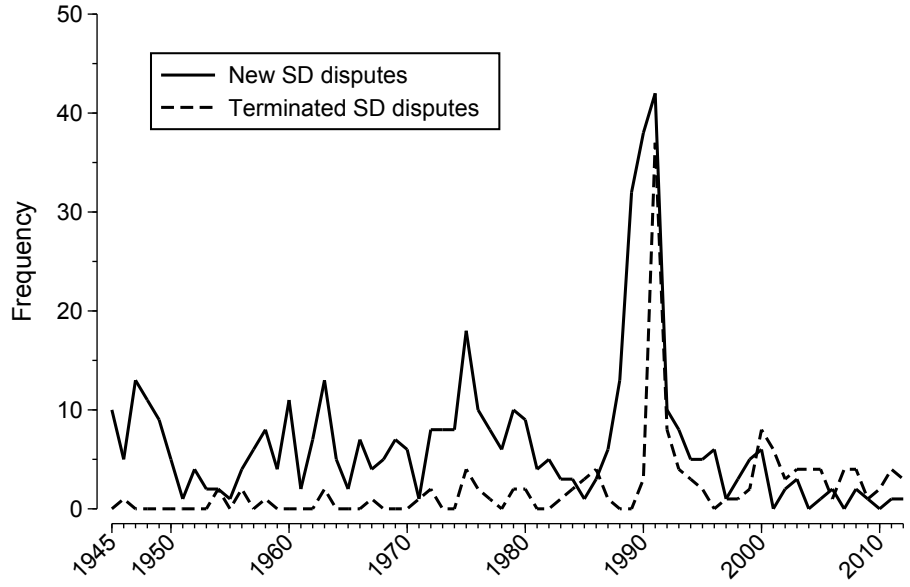
some countries and regions than in others, disputes over self-rule thus really constitute a global phenomenon.

Figure 5.3 underlines this finding. The figure shows the shares of countries with at least one active SD dispute across several world regions, as well as globally.[6] It becomes evident that substantial numbers of countries in all world regions confront at least one SD challenger. As of 2012, around 60% of all countries in the Americas, Asia and Europe have at least one SD dispute. With around 45%, this figure is somewhat lower in Sub-Sahara Africa, Oceania, and MENA, but still, almost every second state in these regions faces one or even multiple SDMs. Furthermore, Figure 5.3 shows that the share of countries affected by at least one SD dispute has increased over time in almost all world regions (Oceania being the only exception). Globally, only 20% of all countries had one or more SD challengers in 1945, but 55% of all countries had at least one SD dispute in 2012.

Another notable finding is that SD disputes are highly persistent. As Table 5.1 above shows, only 30% of all SD disputes have terminated, while approximately 70% of all SD disputes are

[6]The total number of countries used to derive the share of countries with at least one SD challenger is based on Gleditsch & Ward (1999).

Figure 5.4: Number of new and terminated SD disputes per calendar year



ongoing as of 2012.[7] The average duration of an SD dispute is almost 30 years.[8] By implication, the increases in SD dispute activity described above are due to a combination of new disputes constantly emerging and old SD disputes rarely ending. This is nicely illustrated by Figure 5.4. Critically, many SD disputes remain active even when the state makes major concessions (with the evident exception of grants of secession). That is, even if the state grants a group significant autonomy, at least parts of the SDM often continue to make claims for more self-rule. The disputes involving the Catalans and Basques in Spain and the Scots and the Northern Irish Catholics in the United Kingdom, which all involved major autonomy concessions by the respective host states, represent good examples.

The Global Incidence of Separatist Armed Conflict

I now turn to map the data on separatist armed conflict. How prevalent is separatist armed conflict? Table 5.2 shows that a total of 151 SD disputes involved separatist armed conflict, or somewhat less than a third of the total number of disputes. 53 of the 151 violent SD

[7]These figures may overstate the persistence of SD disputes somewhat due to the 10-year rule, which has the possible implication that some of the disputes that are coded as ongoing have in fact ended. However, at the same time it is worth noting that about 15% of the cases that are coded as ended did not really end, but are coded as ended only due to a technical reason: a country breakup. That is, the respective SD disputes are coded as ended only because the ethnic group changed its host state, while the SD dispute continued under the new host state. Compare the example of the Hungarians in Czechoslovakia/Slovakia mentioned earlier.

[8]Again, the ten year rule may contribute to the high duration.

Table 5.2: Prevalence of separatist armed conflict, 1945–2012

Violent SD disputes	151
Countries	58
SD disputes with multiple episodes of separatist armed conflict	53
Total number of episodes	234
Average duration of episodes (years)	9.28
Terminated episodes (2012)	203
Ongoing episodes (2012)	31

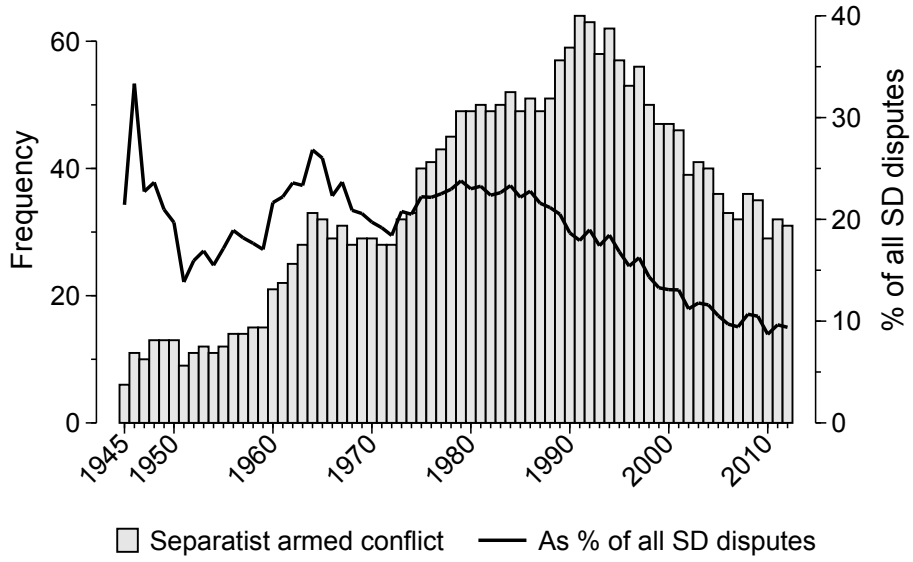
disputes had more than one episode of separatist armed conflict, meaning that they had multiple independent spells of separatist armed conflict interrupted by periods of peace. In total, there are 234 independent episodes of separatist armed conflict. Crucially, many of these episodes are lengthy affairs; the average duration of an episode of separatist armed conflict is more than 9 years.[9]

These figures point to the high policy relevance of inquiries into self-rule conflicts, the conditions under which they turn violent, and the effects of interventions such as SD referendums. However, several additional important insights emerge as we consider temporal dynamics. Figure 5.5 shows that the number of separatist armed conflicts was relatively low in 1945 (6), but soon began to increase. While there were only 13 active separatist armed conflicts in 1950, 1960 had already 21, 1970 29, and 1980 49. In 1991, the number of active separatist armed conflicts peaked at 64. Fortunately, the number of separatist armed conflicts decreased significantly in subsequent years, reaching 47 in 2000, and 31 in 2012, the last year that is covered. While still high, the number of armed conflicts over self-rule has thus in recent years returned to the level of the early 1970s.

While the absolute number of separatist armed conflicts has been decreasing for some time now, it is also notable that the relative number of SD disputes that take violent forms has been decreasing for even longer (see Figure 5.5). As of 2012, only 10% of all SD disputes involved armed conflict, a figure that is lower than anything we have seen to this date since World War Two. While separatism remains an important source of violence, we can thus observe a trend towards nonviolent contention for self-rule. Possible reasons for this trend include the increased prevalence of peacekeeping and other interventions by international organizations, and a trend towards more frequent accommodation of ethnic self-rule claims (Doyle &

[9]This figure includes the 31 episodes that were ongoing by 2012.

Figure 5.5: Temporal distribution of separatist armed conflicts



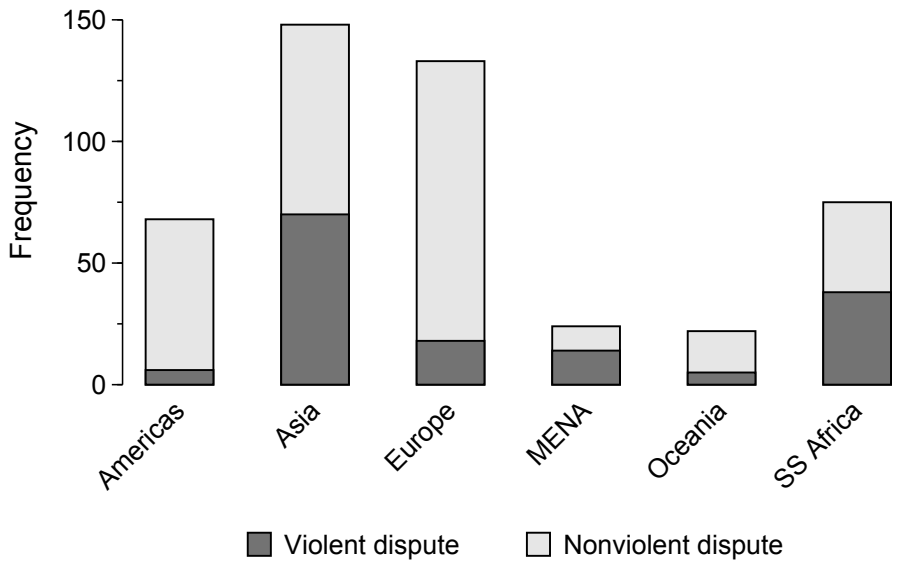
Sambanis 2006, Beardsley, Cunningham & White 2015, Goldstein 2011, Cederman, Gleditsch & Wucherpfennig 2016, Gurr 2000*a*). Another possible contributor is the increased prevalence of agreed SD referendums, assuming they indeed enhance peace (see chapter 7).

Finally, we take a look at the geographic location of separatist armed conflicts. Figure 5.6 shows the number of SD disputes that have involved an armed conflict in at least one year across several world regions.[10] For comparison, the graph also shows the number of nonviolent disputes in these regions. It becomes evident that violent contention over self-rule is concentrated in two world regions: Asia and Sub-Sahara Africa. In Asia, 70 of the totally 148 SD disputes involved armed conflict, or 47%. Notable countries include India, where 18 of its totally 30 SD disputes have involved armed conflict, and even more so Myanmar, where all 14 of its 14 SD disputes have been violent. In Sub-Sahara Africa, 37 of 75 SD disputes involved armed conflict, or 51%. Countries with many violent SD disputes include Ethiopia, where all 8 disputes turned violent, Nigeria (4 out of 14), Sudan (3 out of 3), and South Africa (3 out of 8). The remaining world regions feature a substantially lower number of armed conflicts over self-rule. This applies in particular to Europe, Oceania, and the Americas.[11]

[10]The conclusions remain similar if comparisons are made based on single dispute-years (thus counting each instance of armed conflict in a year separately).

[11]The remaining region, MENA, has few separatist armed conflicts in absolute terms but not relative to the (small) total number of SD disputes.

Figure 5.6: Regional distribution of violent and nonviolent SD disputes



5.2.3 Comparison with Existing Datasets

The SDM-Eurasia dataset is not the first attempt to code SD disputes. However, a crucial limitation of existing datasets is that they only cover a small and biased sample of all SD disputes. In the following few paragraphs, I demonstrate this empirically by comparing case coverage between SDM-Eurasia and three prominent existing data sets.[12] I also discuss why discrepancies emerge and their implications for empirical research.

I compare case coverage by contrasting the SDM-Eurasia dataset with the Minorities at Risk (MAR) dataset (Gurr 1993, Gurr 2000*c*, Minorities at Risk Project 2009), the 2003 Peace and Conflict report by the Center of International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM) (Marshall & Gurr 2003), and the 2008 Peace and Conflict report by the CIDCM (Hewitt, Wilkenfeld & Gurr 2008). Similarly to SDM-Eurasia, all three datasets provide information on noncolonial separatist challenges across the globe in the post-Second World War phase. Two of the three datasets—MAR and the 2003 CIDCM report—have been selected as they constitute the main sources of data used for the identification of SD disputes in extant academic research (e.g. Ayres & Saideman 2000, Cunningham 2011, Cunningham 2013*a*, Cunningham 2014, Siroky

[12]This subsection draws on a similar comparison conducted on the basis of an earlier version of the SDM-Eurasia dataset (see Sambanis, Germann & Schädel 2016). For additional details on how case coverage is compared refer to Sambanis, Germann & Schädel (2016).

& Cuffe 2015, Walter 2006*a*). Conversely, the 2008 CIDCM report has been included as it constitutes the most comprehensive collection available to date, even though it has not been widely used in academic research.[13]

Already a casual glance at summary statistics reveals important differences (see Table 5.3). The SDM-Eurasia dataset includes many more SD disputes compared even to the most comprehensive data existing to date, the 2008 CIDCM report. While CIDCM (2008) identifies a total of 175 SD disputes in 82 countries, SDM-Eurasia in the same time frame (1945–2006) identifies more than double the number of SD disputes (462) in substantially more countries (118). The differences are yet starker when comparing SDM-Eurasia to CIDCM (2003) and MAR, the two datasets that have frequently been used in previous research. Crucially, the picture also remains similar when combining the information provided by all existing datasets, thus demonstrating that the contribution made by the SDM-Eurasia data consists of more than simply combining the information provided in the different existing datasets.[14]

Why is the number of SD disputes so much lower in the other datasets? Small differences regarding coding rules are partly to blame, but coding error appears to be the main reason. Overall, the coding rules are rather similar across datasets: all datasets under consideration code both claims for outright secession and more limited forms of internal autonomy, both violent and nonviolent claims, and both highly salient disputes and disputes involving weakly mobilized groups, such as the Cornish in the United Kingdom. Further, all datasets under consideration exclude colonial disputes and only code ethnic claims, but at the same time have a broad understanding of ethnicity that includes regionally defined groups, such as the Crimean Russians. True, the devil sometimes lies in the details; indeed, small differences regarding coding rules do account for some of the discrepancies. First, while the SDM-Eurasia dataset seeks to disaggregate 'umbrella' ethnic groups whenever possible, the other datasets often code a single aggregate group. This mainly applies to SD disputes involving indigenous groups. For example, while both MAR and CIDCM code a single SD dispute involving Native Americans in the US, the SDM-Eurasia dataset codes 5 separate disputes involving more disaggregated

[13]I do not include the more recently compiled datasets by Coggins (2011) and Griffiths (2015) as they have a narrower focus on secessionist conflicts and cannot thus be directly compared to the SDM-Eurasia data.

[14]Notably, several of the cases identified by MAR and the two CIDCM reports (20 in total) are likely to be false positives as we, despite extensive research into these cases, did not find any corroborating evidence of mobilization for self-rule.

Table 5.3: Comparing case coverage across datasets

	MAR		CIDCM (2003)		CIDCM (2008)		All combined	
	MAR	SDM	CIDCM	SDM	CIDCM	SDM	Comb.	SDM
Period	1945–2006		1955–2002		1955–2006		1945–2006	
SD disputes	177	465	148	456	175	462	237	465
Countries	81	118	78	117	82	118	98	118
Regional distribution:								
Americas	21	68	14	65	17	68	29	68
Asia	55	148	56	147	67	147	79	148
Europe	41	132	34	131	41	132	56	132
MENA	20	22	8	19	10	20	20	22
Oceania	4	22	3	22	6	22	7	22
Sub-Sahara Africa	36	73	33	72	34	73	46	73
Violent SD disputes (%)	57.63	32.04	54.73	30.03	54.86	30.30	52.32	32.04
SD disputes in democracies (%)	27.27	39.30	31.97	38.67	39.08	39.56	34.47	39.30
SD disputes in high-income countries (%)	10.73	27.10	15.54	27.63	18.86	28.14	15.61	27.10

Note: The geographic location is coded based on the location of the territory that is claimed. An SD dispute is considered violent if there was an armed conflict over SD in at least one year. Wherever possible armed conflicts are determined on the basis of the data contained in the SDM-Eurasia dataset reviewed above. For the disputes that are not in SDM-Eurasia, armed conflict data is derived directly from MAR or the CIDCM reports. An SD dispute is considered to be located in a democracy if the host state's polity2 score is 6 or higher in 75% or more of all years it was active (data source: Marshall, Gurr & Jaggers 2014). In turn, an SD dispute is considered to be located in a high-income country if the host state's GDP per capita is at least 10,000 constant US dollars (base: 2005 prices) in 75% or more of all active years (data source: Gleditsch 2002). MENA stands for Middle East and Northern Africa.

groups, such as the Cherokee and the Dine. Furthermore, the other datasets systematically exclude some groups that SDM-Eurasia includes. MAR, for example, covers only disputes involving ethnic groups that have a population of more than 100,000 or constitute more than 1% of a country's population. MAR also covers only countries with a population of more than 500,000. By contrast, the SDM-Eurasia dataset employs no population thresholds and includes all SD disputes irrespectively of the demographic size of the claimants or the country. On the other hand, the CIDCM reports exclude SD disputes involving ethnic groups that are not territorially concentrated as well as nonviolent disputes that have no longer been active at the time of coding (Quinn & Gurr 2003, p. 26). SDM-Eurasia, by contrast, includes both SD claims by dispersed groups (such as the Turkish Cypriots before the island's partition in 1974) and nonviolent disputes that have terminated (such as the Macedonian movement in the former Yugoslavia).

While there are thus some definitional differences, these do not, however, account for all, or even the majority, of the discrepancies. The disaggregation issue applies mostly to indigenous groups in the Americas, which make up a small minority of the cases. Similarly, disputes in very small countries or involving very small groups account only for a small number of the cases.[15] That said, in the case of CIDCM a substantial share of the discrepancies can be explained by the decision to exclude SD disputes involving groups that are not territorially concentrated[16] and in particular due to their decision to leave out nonviolent SD disputes that are no longer active (approximately 20% of all disputes coded in SDM-Eurasia are nonviolent and no longer active). But then excluding these disputes for no apparent reason makes little sense and is likely to induce selection bias.

In sum, definitional differences account for some of the disparities, but not all of them. Coding error appears to be the main reason. Critically, the omissions in MAR and the CIDCM reports are not random but systematically related to core concepts. A look at the regional distributions of SD disputes gives a first idea of the direction of these biases (see Table 5.3).

[15]The SDM-Eurasia dataset includes but 6 SD disputes in countries with a population of less than 500,000, and claims by groups that are too small for MAR make up less than 10% of the SD disputes coded in the Eurasian sample (data on the claimant's size is not available globally, see below).

[16]In the Eurasian sample, a third of all SD disputes involve groups that are not territorially concentrated. However, SDM-Eurasia requires a high threshold to code a group as territorially concentrated: at least half of all group members must reside in a geographically contiguous territory where they make up an absolute majority. Other datasets, including MAR, apply less strict criteria. The CIDCM reports do not state explicitly what they mean by territorial concentration. It is thus difficult to tell how many groups they dropped due to this.

While the SDM-Eurasia dataset includes higher numbers SD disputes across all world regions, the highest number of disputes is missing in Europe. Further analyses confirm that MAR and CIDCM underrepresent SD disputes in rich countries and, to a lesser extent, in democracies. However, the starkest difference emerges with regards to violence. Both MAR and CIDCM systematically overrepresent violent SD disputes. For example, whereas almost 60% of the SD disputes coded by MAR involved separatist armed conflict, less than a third of the disputes coded by SDM-Eurasia in the same time period involved separatist armed conflict. This skewed data coverage is likely to lead to systematically biased inferences in all studies of separatism drawing on MAR and the CIDCM reports (Hug 2003, Hug 2013). In particular, usage of these datasets in the present context would likely lead to distorted estimates of the effects of SD referendums on separatist conflict. As it constitutes a better approximation of the universe of (noncolonial) SD disputes, the SDM-Eurasia data is less prone to these selection issues.

5.3 Data Available for European and Asian Countries

I now turn to a discussion of the more detailed data that is available for a subset of all noncolonial SD disputes. These additional measures are intended to capture several aspects related to the statics and dynamics of SD disputes. This data makes it possible to study dynamic outcomes of SD disputes, and in the subsequent chapters I will make extensive use of it to analyze occurrences of agreed and unilateral SD referendums and their consequences for separatist armed conflict.

SDM-Eurasia is not the first attempt to code disaggregated data on SD disputes. MAR, for example, provides information on a number of pertinent factors, and further variables have been added by others who have built on the MAR or CIDCM SD dispute data, including Walter (2006*a*) and Cunningham (2014). However, as shown the MAR and CIDCM datasets are heavily incomplete and, by implication, the existing measures only available for a fraction of the total number of SD disputes. Further, some of the measures used in previous work have significant deficiencies (see e.g. Sambanis, Germann & Schädel 2016). The SDM-Eurasia constitutes a first step towards the resolution of these weaknesses. It provides detailed information on several pertinent factors associated with separatism, including the type of self-rule claimed by SDMs, several structural attributes of the ethnic groups (e.g. their demographic size) on behalf of which SDMs claim self-rule and the regions they claim self-rule for (e.g. whether it contains oil), and state-movement interactions (e.g. in the form of concessions from the state to SDMs).

Figure 5.7: Geographic coverage of Eurasian sample

Many of these variables had to be coded from scratch, and their richness and detail goes far beyond what is available from existing datasets.

Unfortunately, it proved not feasible to code such detailed information for all SD disputes around the world. Researching and quantifying the dynamics of separatist conflict involved new primary research. Given time and resource constraints, a conscious decision was therefore made in favor of a regional focus spanning all countries in Europe and Asia, including their noncolonial overseas entities (hence the name of the dataset, SDM-Eurasia).[17] Figure 5.7 maps the geographic coverage.[18] Global coverage would no doubt have been desirable. As a result of SDM-Eurasia's regional focus, the statistical results presented in subsequent chapters are based exclusively on experiences in European and Asian countries, and these may or may not be generalizable. Nevertheless, the lessons that can be drawn are significant. As we have seen, both Europe and Asia constitute hotbeds of separatism. A total of 293 SD disputes involve countries in Europe and Asia, or about 62% of the worldwide total (see Table 5.4). 91 of the totally 151 violent SD disputes are located in European and Asian countries (or 60% of the worldwide total), and 138 of the totally 234 armed conflict episodes (or 59% of the worldwide total). Finally, of the totally 163 noncolonial SD referendums held between 1945 and 2012, 113, or almost 70% of the worldwide total, were held in European or Asian countries. The shares remain similar if SD referendums are disaggregated by whether they are agreed by states and SDMs or launched unilaterally.

[17]It should be noted that the SDM-Eurasia dataset also includes a randomized sample of SDMs worldwide. However, for the present purposes the random sample is ill-suited as it is rather small and includes few SD referendums. The statistics discussed below regarding the demographic size of SD groups, the type of SD that is claimed, and the effectiveness of SDMs draw exclusively on the Eurasian sample.

[18]The figure highlights all European and Asian countries irrespectively of whether they had an SD dispute or not. Thus, not all of these countries are actually included.

Table 5.4: Coverage of Eurasian sample

	Global	**Eurasia**	**%**
SD disputes	470	293	62.34
Countries	120	55	45.83
Violent SD disputes	151	91	60.26
Armed conflict episodes	234	138	58.97
SD referendums (noncolonial, 1945–2012)	163	113	69.33
Agreed SD referendums	83	54	65.06
Unilateral SD referendums	80	59	73.75

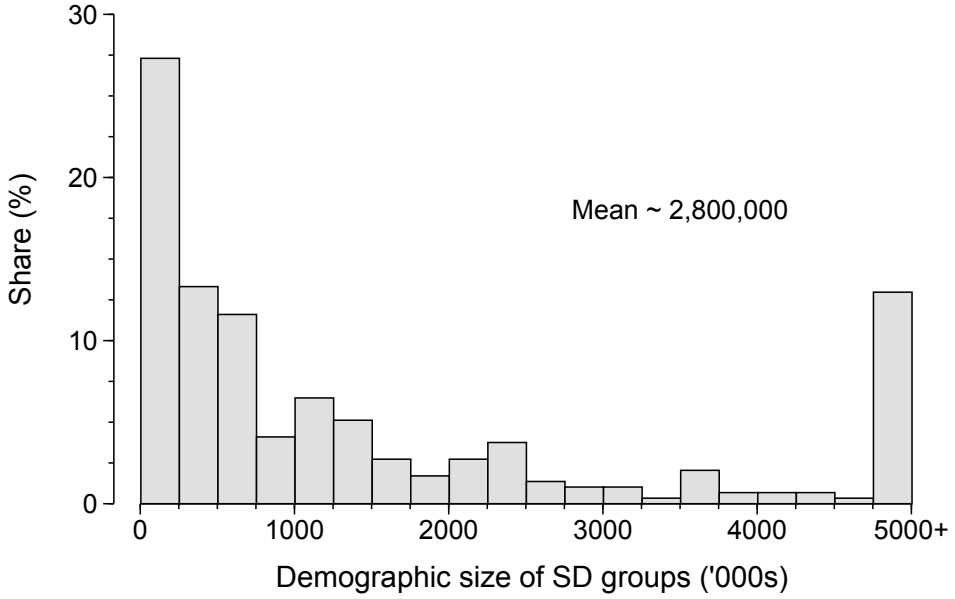
It is not necessary to review the disaggregated data available for European and Asian countries in full here. More detailed information on what measures are used and how they are calibrated will be given in the empirical chapters. Instead, I will focus on only three concepts: the demographic size of the claimants, the type of self-rule that is claimed by SDMs, and how successful SDMs are in reaching their goals. In addition to yielding several new insights, this will provide a good glimpse of the richness of the data used in subsequent chapters to explore correlates of agreed and unilateral SD referendums and their implications for separatist armed conflict.

5.3.1 Demographic Size of Self-Determination Groups

How large are the ethnic groups on behalf of which SDMs claim self-rule? For all SD disputes in European and Asian countries, the SDM-Eurasia dataset provides information on the demographic size of the ethnic group (or 'SD group') on whose behalf SDMs claim self-rule. The data on ethnic group sizes was derived from two main sources. First, data was culled from the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) project (Wimmer, Cederman & Min 2009, Cederman, Wimmer & Min 2010, Vogt, Bormann, Rüegger, Cederman, Hunziker & Girardin 2015) for all SD groups for which there was correspondence with an ethnic group represented in EPR. For most of the remaining cases the data is based on information contained in Minahan's (2002) encyclopedia of stateless nations.

A look at the data suggests considerable variation as to the demographic size of SD groups. Figure 5.8 shows the demographic size of all SD groups in European and Asian countries (averaged across time). It becomes evident that many SD groups are relatively small. 13% of all SD groups in European and Asian countries have a population of less than 100,000. Examples of such small SD groups include the Ladins in Italy, the Alanders in Finland, and the Faroese in

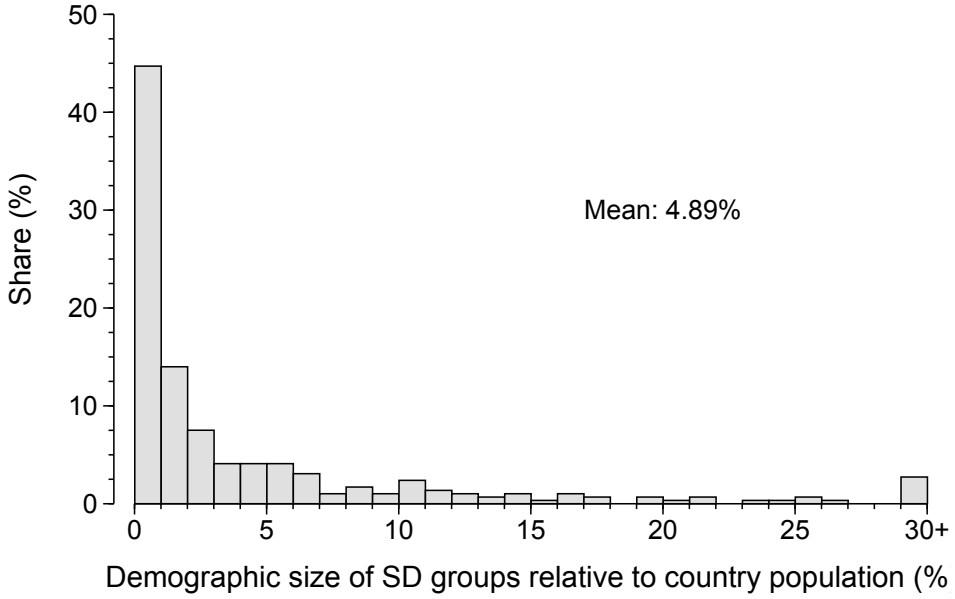
Figure 5.8: Absolute demographic size of SD groups



Denmark. Another 14% have in-between 100,000 and 250,000 group members (e.g. the Jurassians in Switzerland), and another 29% in-between 250,000 and a million members (e.g. the Catholics in Northern Ireland). Thus, more than half of all SD groups have a population of less than a million (56%). But at the same time, there is also a significant number of rather large SD groups. About 13% of all SD groups have a population in-between two and five millions (e.g. the Moros in the Philippines or the Lithuanians in the former USSR), and another 13% have more than five million members (e.g. the Assamese in India or the Catalans in Spain). At the extreme end, there are groups such as the English in the United Kingdom and the Bengalis in Pakistan with more than 45 million group members.

Thus far the focus has been on the absolute demographic size of SD groups, but relative group sizes are at least as important. This is so because relative population figures better capture the strength of ethnic groups vis-á-vis the state (Cederman, Wimmer & Min 2010). Thus, to a higher extent than absolute population figures, relative figures are likely to shape the dynamics and outcomes of SD disputes. And, crucially, groups that are large in absolute terms may be small in comparison to their countries' total population, and vice versa. For example, the Assamese in India may have approximately 12 million members in absolute terms, but given India's vast population, this translates into less than 1.5% in relative terms. Figure 5.9 shows the distribution of SD group sizes relative to country population. It becomes clear that in relative terms, the overwhelming majority of SD groups in European and Asian countries

Figure 5.9: Relative demographic size of SD groups

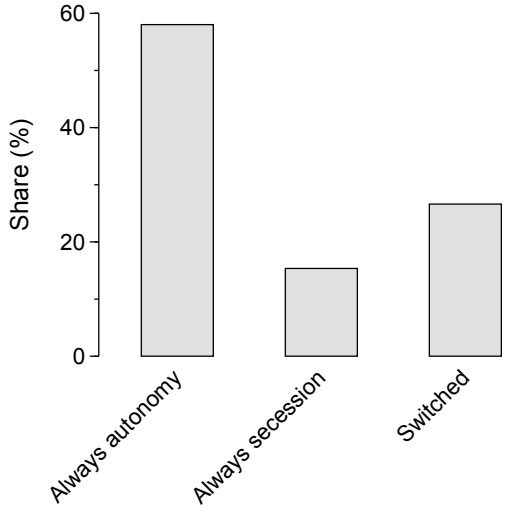


is small. 17% of all groups make up 0.1% of their countries' populations or less. Almost half make up 1% or less (45%), and about three quarters of all SD groups make up 5% or less. This suggests that claiming self-rule is primarily a strategy of the weak; of groups that at least in demographic terms have relatively little clout with their governments. However, that said, not all SD groups are small in relative terms. About 15% of all SD groups in European and Asian countries constitute more than 10% of their countries' population, and about 5% of all SD groups even constitute more than 20% of their countries' population. At the extreme end, there are groups such as the Flemish in Belgium and, again, the English in the United Kingdom and the Bengalis in Pakistan that make up the majority in their own countries.

5.3.2 Type of Claim

How radical tend SDMs to be? Do most SDMs claim outright secession? Or do most make more limited claims for internal autonomy? The SDM-Eurasia dataset allows us to evaluate this question, as it includes yearly data on the type of self-rule claimed by SDMs for all SD disputes located in European and Asian countries. Crucially, the claims variable tracks what is defined as the *dominant* claim made by SDMs. It often occurs that different representatives of the same movement make different claims. For instance, some Corsican organizations make claims for increased autonomy, whereas others claim outright independence. The SDM-Eurasia claims variable records the claim that is dominantly raised, that is, the

Figure 5.10: Self-rule claims



claim made by the most important and strongest factions.[19] Several sources were used to code the claims variable, including the three encyclopedic sources already noted above (Hewitt & Cheetham 2000, Minahan 1996, Minahan 2002) and the World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples (Minority Rights Group International 2015). However, in many cases the information provided in these sources proved insufficient and coders had to rely on more detailed, case-specific literature.

A look at the data suggests that most SDMs make relatively moderate claims (see Figure 5.10): almost 60% of all SDMs in European and Asian countries have consistently claimed some form of internal autonomy. Well-known examples include the Breton movement in France, the Jurassian movement in Switzerland, and the Galician SDM in Spain. By contrast, only about 15%, and thus a small minority of all SDMs, have consistently claimed outright secession (including both claims for national independence and the merger with another state). Well-known examples include the Assamese SDM in India and the East Timorese SDM in Indonesia. Perhaps most interestingly, in about a quarter of the cases the dominant claim has shifted over time from autonomy to secession, and/or vice versa.[20] This suggests that self-rule claims radicalize or de-radicalize endogenously due to interactions with the state or changes in the

[19]If two claims appear equally strong or if the evidence was insufficient to decide which claim is stronger, the SDM-Eurasia dataset records the more radical claim. Thus, if there are equally strong claims for autonomy and secession, the SDM-Eurasia dataset codes a claim for secession.

[20]In 56% of the switched cases, SDMs first dominantly claimed autonomy and then secession, and in 44% of the switched cases first secession and then autonomy. In a third of the switched cases, there was more than one switch (e.g. autonomy-secession-autonomy).

opportunity structure (Jenne, Saideman & Lowe 2007)[21], and thus also that they are likely to be malleable by dynamic changes and interventions, such as accommodation, repression, violence—and SD referendums.

5.3.3 Success of Self-Determination Movements

The final question addressed in this chapter is how successful SDMs are in reaching their goals. Existing research suggests that states almost always refuse to compromise when faced with a self-rule challenger. For example, according to data collected by Walter (2006*a*), 56% of all self-rule challengers in European and Asian countries were never granted any form of accommodation, whereas only 34% of the groups were granted a higher level of self-rule by their host states in the form of either autonomy or independence. The SDM-Eurasia dataset allows to reassess this claim using improved data on concessions made by states to SD groups. Several different types of government concessions are included: concessions related to secession and independence, concessions related to internal autonomy, concessions related to cultural rights (e.g. linguistic or religious rights), and concessions related to the inclusion of group members in the government's ruling coalition (i.e., central state access). A broad array of sources was consulted for the coding of government concessions. Again, the previously mentioned encyclopedic sources dealing with separatism (Hewitt & Cheetham 2000, Minahan 1996, Minahan 2002) and the World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples (Minority Rights Group International 2015) often constituted useful points of departure. In many cases, coders had yet to refer to additional case-specific literature and news sources. In addition, we also consulted existing attempts to quantify government concessions to SDMs (in particular Cunningham 2014) and, for those cases with correspondence to a group coded in EPR, information on concessions related to central state access was culled from EPR (Wimmer, Cederman & Min 2009, Cederman, Wimmer & Min 2010, Vogt et al. 2015). By reviewing the broadest set of sources yet consulted in the coding of government concessions to SDMs, the SDM-Eurasia dataset identifies many government actions that have been overlooked in previous attempts to code concessions to SDMs.

The concession data included in the SDM-Eurasia dataset suggests that government accom-

[21]The example of the Catalans in Spain is illustrative. While there have always been claims for both autonomy and secession, the claim for increased autonomy has long been considered dominant (Guibernau 1999, Keating 1996). However, following a row over the Catalonia's Autonomy Statute and the annulment of several provisions by Spain's Constitutional Court in 2010, the Catalan SDM's dominant claim has in recent years shifted to independence (Burg 2015).

Table 5.5: Effectiveness of SDMs

	Freq.	**SDMs with ≥ 1 event (%)**
Concessions	893	80.89
Central state access	59	15.70
Cultural rights	154	37.20
Autonomy	655	67.92
Secession	25	7.85
Self-rule concessions	206	46.42
Autonomy	187	42.32
Secession	19	6.48
Unilateral achievements:		
Unilateral secessions	5	1.71
De facto independence	35	10.58

modation of SDMs is far more frequent than previously assumed. Table 5.5 gives an overview. Overall, the SDM-Eurasia dataset identifies a total of 893 independent instances of government concessions to noncolonial SDMs in European and Asian countries between 1945 and 2012, which translates into a 10% probability that an SDM receives a concession in a given year. The concessions are not, of course, equally distributed. Some SDMs received a high number of concessions,[22] while others received relatively few. However, only about a fifth of all SDMs were never granted a concession according to SDM-Eurasia, and thus way fewer than the 56% suggested by Walter. Further, according to SDM-Eurasia about 70% of the SDMs received a concession on autonomy or independence, compared to Walter's 34%.

That said, the concession measure on which these figures are based is relatively inclusive and may thus overstate the effectiveness of SDMs. First, it includes concessions related to cultural rights and access to central state power, and thus policies that have no direct relation to self-rule. Second, SDM-Eurasia's understanding of what constitutes a concession on autonomy is fairly broad (see Sambanis, Germann & Schädel 2016) and thus includes some such concessions that are of relatively minor consequence. For example, SDM-Eurasia codes several autonomy concessions for the Bretons, given France's stepwise movements towards more devolved government (Cole 2006). But even if the Bretons now have a higher level of SD, the level of autonomy enjoyed by the Bretons remains limited and cannot, for example, be compared with the level of autonomy enjoyed by the Scots. And third, the SDM-Eurasia concession measure also includes

[22]The SDM-Eurasia dataset records up to 13 instances of government accommodation per SD dispute.

some concessions that have been only partially implemented.

Does the conclusion that states are far more accommodative than previously assumed remain when a more restrictive measure is used? To assess this, I recoded the concession measure counting only concessions that significantly increased the claimant's level of self-rule (i.e., involve autonomy or secession) while excluding minor autonomy concessions (such as the concessions granted to the Bretons) as well as concessions that were only partially implemented. This more restrictive measure, listed under "self-rule concessions" in Table 5.5, drops about 60% of the autonomy and independence concessions coded in SDM-Eurasia and all concessions related to cultural rights and central state access. Still, the conclusion remains that states are more accommodative than previously assumed. While Walter suggested that only about a third of all SDMs received a concession on autonomy or independence, almost half of all SDMs (46%) got a self-rule concession as defined above. Meanwhile, it is worth noting that most of these concessions are related to autonomy (187 of the 206 self-rule concessions). This should not be surprising given that, as discussed in chapter 3, states attribute high value to their territorial integrity but may have a higher willingness to agree the devolution of competencies to regions. Notably, out of the 19 cases where a state nevertheless agreed to part with territory, 14 are due to a single event: the dissolution of the former USSR in 1991. Other examples of agreed secessions include East Timor (1999) and Montenegro (2006).[23]

Finally, it is worth adding that accommodation granted by states—the focus up to this point—is not the only way how SDMs can achieve some or all of their goals. SDMs may also unilaterally achieve self-rule. However, this rarely succeeds. According to data recorded in the SDM-Eurasia dataset, a mere five SDMs in the Eurasian sample managed to secede unilaterally, often as a result of war. Examples include the Bengalis, the Croats, and the Bosniaks. A somewhat higher number of SDMs (35) managed to separate de facto from their host state, but remained without international recognition. However, in 25 of the 35 cases, the de facto independent entities ultimately reintegrated into the institutions of their host state, usually as a result of military defeat (e.g. Russia's Chechens in 2000) or as part of a negotiated settlement promising autonomy in return for reintegration (e.g. Moldova's Gagauz in 1995). In

[23]The more inclusive concession measure codes a slightly higher number of secession concessions (25) as it includes independence offers by states that have not (or not yet) been implemented and/or were reversed at a later point in time. For example, India originally acknowledged Kashmir's right to secede after a referendum but later backtracked.

a further nine cases de facto independence has been ongoing by 2012 with yet uncertain outcome, including the cases of the Armenians in Azerbaijan, and the Abkhaz and South Ossetians in Georgia. In only one case, that of Kosovo, did a de facto independent entity manage to get widespread international recognition.

5.4 Summary

This chapter reviewed the SDM-Eurasia dataset. We have seen what this data contains (all noncolonial SD disputes between 1945 and 2012 including data on periods of separatist armed conflict and, for a regional sample, a range of more detailed measures on the statics and dynamics of self-rule conflicts); the coding rules used; and the sources that have been consulted when constructing the dataset. Critically, we have also seen that the SDM-Eurasia data improves significantly over extant attempts to code SD disputes. While extant datasets have tended to underreport nonviolent movements in wealthy and democratic countries, the SDM-Eurasia dataset significantly expands case coverage, thus removing a potential source of bias. Further, SDM-Eurasia includes data on concepts such as government concessions that goes well beyond the status quo in terms of scope and detail.

In an exploratory mapping exercise based on this novel data, we observed that noncolonial disputes over self-rule have become a much more prominent phenomenon since World War Two. Separatism turned out to be a more prominent feature of some world regions (particularly Europe and Asia) compared to others (particularly MENA and Sub-Sahara Africa), but even in the latter cases every second state today faces at least one separatist challenger. Thus, SD disputes really constitute a global phenomenon.

We have also seen that self-rule conflicts constitute a major source of violence. Between 1945 and the early 1990s, there have been constant increases in the number of separatist armed conflicts, peaking at 64 in 1991. Since then, their number has fortunately decreased, and we can more generally observe a trend towards nonviolent contention for self-rule. Nevertheless, separatism remains a major source of violence, especially in Asia and Sub-Sahara Africa. 2012, the last year covered by the SDM-Eurasia dataset, had more than 30 active separatist armed conflicts, thus underlining the need to explore the potential of SD referendums and other forms of interventions to pacify conflicts over self-rule.

Finally, drawing on the more detailed data that is available for European and Asian coun-

tries, this chapter showed evidence regarding the demographic size of self-rule claimants, the type of self-rule they tend to demand, and how successful they are in this. With regard to demographics, we saw that there is considerable variation; while the majority of SD groups are rather small, others have populations of several millions, and some even make up the majority of their own countries. With regard to the nature of their claims, we found that most SDMs make relatively modest claims for internal autonomy. However, we also found that many movements switch between modest claims for autonomy and more radical claims for outright secession, suggesting that SD claims are endogenous and could be shaped by SD referendums and other dynamic interventions. Finally, we saw that many SDMs are relatively successful in reaping concessions from the state—especially compared to previous suggestions—but relatively unsuccessful in achieving their goals unilaterally.

With this, we are now well prepared to explore, in the chapter that follows, the determinants of SD referendums, which as noted repeatedly already constitutes an important preparatory step before we can evaluate the (differential) conflict resolution potential of (agreed and unilateral) SD referendums empirically.

Chapter 6

The Determinants of Self-Determination Referendums

6.1 Introduction

What factors make SD referendums likely to occur? This is not a question that has received major attention in the academic literature. What is more, the little evidence that exists is limited in several important regards. Most importantly, the extant literature has tended to treat SD referendums as if they were all driven by the same theoretical processes. However, as we have seen in chapter 3, SD referendums may emerge under a variety of circumstances and can have very different strategic motivations. A crucial distinction emerges between agreed and unilateral SD referendums. Further important differences emerge depending on whether agreed SD referendums are aimed at the ratification of a settlement or arbitration, and whether unilateral SD referendums are initiated by states or by SDMs. These different types of SD referendums are likely to be driven by different theoretical processes, but this is generally ignored in the existing literature.

In this chapter I thus explore, both theoretically and empirically, the determinants of these different types of SD referendums. This constitutes an important preparatory step for our main empirical task, the evaluation of the hypothesized effects of agreed and unilateral SD referendums on separatist armed conflict. In the next chapter, I will seek to partial out the independent effects of agreed and unilateral SD referendums using multiple regression. This is not easy because, as argued in chapter 3, there are good reasons to believe that agreed and unilateral SD referendums are endogenous to the risk of separatist armed conflict. Whereas agreed

SD referendums are likely to emerge in situations where peace is likely to begin with, unilateral SD referendums are likely to emerge in situations with a significant ex-ante risk of separatist armed conflict. This renders causal identification difficult. Regression analysis requires that all confounders are identified, measured, and accounted for (Angrist & Pischke 2009, King, Keohane & Verba 1994). That is, we need to account for all factors that simultaneously influence occurrences of agreed and unilateral SD referendums and separatist armed conflict. Otherwise estimates will be biased. At the same time, irrelevant control variables—variables that only affect agreed or unilateral SD referendums, only separatist armed conflict, or neither—should be avoided to retain estimation efficiency (King, Keohane & Verba 1994, Clarke 2005). However, given the limited existing knowledge about the determinants of SD referendums, it is difficult to decide what covariates should be included. While a rich body of literature exists on the determinants of intrastate armed conflict, including those over self-rule, the exiting literature offers few cues to decide which of the known correlates of separatist armed conflict also predict agreed or unilateral SD referendums, and should thus be accounted for. By implication, before evaluating their effects on separatist armed conflict, we first need to learn about the factors that give rise to agreed and unilateral SD referendums.

In addition to preparing the ground for the subsequent analysis, this chapter makes several independent contributions to the extant literature. First, I develop a new model to explain SD referendum occurrences that in deviation to existing work incorporates the crucial distinction between agreed and unilateral SD referendums, including the distinction between their different sub-types. In other words, I here develop an argument that agreed and unilateral SD referendums (and to a lesser extent their sub-types) are likely to be driven by different theoretical processes and thus likely to be differentially affected by variables including the level of democracy and state repression. Second, I identify several determinants of SD referendums that have not been considered in existing studies. Finally, I provide one of the first large-N, cross-national analysis of the determinants of SD referendums. Contrary to much of the existing literature, this analysis avoids problems related to selection on the dependent variable. Further, this will be the first quantitative study that analyzes SD referendum occurrences on the basis of disaggregated data on SD disputes, which allows for closer connections between theory and empirics and thus to better capture the relevant dynamics.

The chapter proceeds as follows. In the next section, I review the existing literature, highlighting what we already know about the determinants of SD referendums, but also the limi-

tations of existing studies. In section three, I proceed to build a new model of SD referendum occurrences. In section four, I discuss the data and methods for the empirical analysis, which is presented in section five. In section six, I report the results of several robustness checks. I conclude with a summary and discussion of the findings.

6.2 Existing Literature

A small but growing number of studies investigates the determinants of SD referendums. The general focus of this literature has been on qualitative case comparisons. This line of research was pioneered by Robert Thompson, who in 1989 published a qualitative comparison of SD referendums in the United Kingdom, Canada, Switzerland, and Spain. In another pioneering qualitative work, Rourke, Hiskes & Zirakzadeh (1992) compared selected referendums with implications for international relations, including several of the SD referendums already analyzed by Thompson (1989). More recently, LeDuc devoted a separate chapter to referendums related to sovereignty and self-rule in his book on the politics of direct democracy, discussing SD referendums in Quebec, Scotland, Wales, Ukraine, and Puerto Rico. Finally, in a yet more recent contribution, Qvortrup (2014*b*) looks at the reasons for selected independence referendums, again using the method of qualitative comparison.[1]

In addition to these qualitative works, the last few years have seen some first attempts to model SD referendum occurrences using large-N techniques. Specifically, Muñoz & Guinjoan (2013) use multiple regression to explore the reasons why some, but not all of Catalonia's municipalities staged unilateral independence referendums between 2009 and 2011. Taking a broader view, Qvortrup (2014*a*) extends the focus to SD referendums around the world while focusing mostly on the post-World War Two period, and presents results from what is likely to be the first cross-national large-N study in the field.[2]

In combination, the existing studies point to a number of possible determinants of SD

[1] Additional notable qualitative works include Morel (2001, 2007) and Walker (2003), who both explore reasons for referendums more generally, but in so doing provide relatively detailed accounts of several SD referendums.

[2] To be more specific, Qvortrup explores the determinants of several types of referendums on "ethnonational issues", including secession and "difference-managing" referendums (a category that in practice overlaps to a large extent with autonomy referendums), but also referendums on national unifications (which do not constitute SD referendums as defined here). Further, it should be noted that there have been cross-national quantitative studies explaining incidences referendums more generally, including those not on self-rule (e.g. Altman 2011, Hug 2004). These works are of limited relevance in the present context, given their simultaneous focus on many different types of referendums. Due to this, it is unclear whether their findings apply to the specific case of the SD referendum.

referendums. Qvortrup (2014*a*), for example, suggests that SD referendums are more likely to occur in democratic societies, given the widened appeal and acceptance of ideas of popular sovereignty and direct participation of citizens in decision-making processes (also see He 2002). Conversely, Thompson (1989) suggests that institutional provisions for referendums, such as constitutional provisions that require referendums before constitutional changes, increase the frequency of SD referendums. Another explanatory factor identified in existing works is the strength and public support enjoyed by self-determination movements (see Thompson 1989, Rourke, Hiskes & Zirakzadeh 1992, Qvortrup 2014*a*). Rourke, Hiskes & Zirakzadeh (1992), for example, observe that SD referendums appear to occur more often when SDMs enjoy electoral successes or are able to showcase their strength in other ways, such as large-scale demonstrations or terrorist attacks. Similarly, in their study of the municipality-level independence referendums in Catalonia between 2009 and 2011, Muñoz & Guinjoan (2013) find that referendums tended to be held in those municipalities where the secessionist movement was strong organizationally and could count on solid public backing. Finally, some studies suggest a diffusion effect. Qvortrup (2014*b*, p. 60), for example, argues that independence referendums have increasingly become the norm since the end of the Cold War, whereas Muñoz & Guinjoan (2013) find that Catalan municipalities became increasingly likely to organize independence referendums between 2009 and 2011 the higher the number of referendums within close spatial proximity, suggesting a demonstration or emulation effect.

But while the existing literature thus points towards several potentially relevant factors, it is at the same time affected by several methodological and conceptual weaknesses which in combination impose clear limits on our knowledge about the determinants of SD referendums. On the conceptual side, existing studies pay only limited attention to the varying dynamics that can give rise to SD referendums. The distinction between agreed and unilateral SD referendums is generally neglected, as are the important differences between agreed SD referendums aimed at the ratification of settlements or arbitration and between unilateral SD referendums initiated by states and SDMs. But these different types of SD referendums are invoked for very different purposes and can thus be expected to emerge in different situations. By treating all SD referendums as the same regardless of how they were initiated, the existing literature therefore misses important aspects of the dynamics leading to SD referendums.

Methodologically, most existing studies are problematic because they select on the dependent variable, meaning that they exclusively focus on referendum cases while ignoring cases

where an SD referendum could have hypothetically occurred, but did not materialize. This applies in particular to qualitative work, which to date has exclusively focused on cases where SD referendums actually did occur.[3] But as is well established, selecting cases based on specific values of the dependent variable (such as considering only referendum cases) is likely to undermine conclusions regarding the effects of explanatory factors (Geddes 1990, King, Keohane & Verba 1994).

Finally, the existing literature generally overemphasizes a small number of well-known cases in Western democracies, such as the SD referendums in Scotland, Wales, Catalonia, the Basque Country, or Quebec. A full understanding of the causes of SD referendums necessarily requires us to go beyond Western democracies and consider the experience of nondemocracies and semidemocracies, such as the wave of referendums that swept through Eastern Europe in the early and mid-1990s (Brady & Kaplan 1994).

After this short methodological interlude, it is now time to turn to the theoretical task of building a new model of SD referendums that incorporates the distinction between agreed and unilateral SD referendums, including their sub-types.

6.3 Building a New Model of Self-Determination Referendum Occurrences

Under what conditions are SD referendums likely to emerge? In this section I develop a new model to explain incidences of SD referendums. I start by making a number of general observations regarding the type of factors that should affect SD referendum occurrences. After this, I proceed with a discussion of specific factors that are likely to affect SD referendum occurrences.

My theoretical point of departure is the observation, made in chapter 3, that SD referendums can be initiated under agreed terms or unilaterally. Agreed and unilateral SD referendums represent very different animals; they enter the politics of SD at different stages, have fundamentally different purposes, and quite different logics. The initiation of agreed SD referendums, on the one hand, is uncontested by both primary actors to SD disputes—states and SDMs. Agreed

[3] Quantitative work is not immune to the problem either. In his recent study of ethnonational referendums, Qvortrup (2014*a*) effectively compares different types of ethnonational referendums to each other while disregarding cases where no ethnonational referendum occurred. Thus, Qvortrup's findings regarding the factors that give rise to SD referendums apply only in comparison to other types of ethnonational referendums, such as referendums on national unifications.

SD referendums therefore necessarily presuppose a significant willingness to make compromises. Take the case of ratification referendums, one of the two types of agreed SD referendums identified in chapter 3. Ratification referendums are votes on negotiated self-rule settlements. Ratification referendums can therefore only occur if the state is willing to decentralize or, in an extreme case, even willing to allow a region to secede. However, often not only the state, but also the separatists have to be willing to make compromises for a ratification referendum to occur. States often have red lines, such as that they will not fully part with territory. Thus the willingness to compromise will often have to extend to the separatists. If the separatists insist on some maximalist demand that is unacceptable to state leaders, a settlement—and therefore a ratification referendum—may become unlikely to occur.

Also the second type of agreed SD referendums, the arbitration referendum, requires a willingness to compromise, if maybe to a lesser extent than the ratification referendum. Arbitration referendums are aimed at the sorting out of a persisting incompatibility between states and SDMs. They are thus held when states and SDMs are unable to agree on a substantive solution to their conflict. Still, the parties must be able to commit to a referendum to sort out their differences. This necessarily requires a willingness to compromise. In many cases, this will apply especially to the state side. As we have seen in chapter 3, arbitration referendums usually take the form of a vote on a maximalist option that is favored by the separatists but rejected by the state. Such referendums imply a risk for the state to lose some, or even all, of its authority over part of its territory, while it would prefer to retain the status quo or make more minimal concessions. Now it is true that state leaders may enter these contests with considerable optimism. But referendum outcomes are notoriously difficult to predict (LeDuc 2002). Ask David Cameron, the former British Prime Minister, who may well have agreed to the 2014 Scottish independence referendum in expectation of a safe win, but ended up with a relatively narrow 45% versus 55% vote against independence (and proceeded to struggle over a similar gamble with the 2016 BREXIT referendum). Therefore, arbitration referendums, like ratification referendums, necessarily presuppose a willingness to make compromises, especially on the state side.[4]

[4]Also the separatists may have to make concessions. For example, Montenegrin separatists had to accept a special majority requirement for independence to pass in Montenegro's 2006 independence referendum (see chapter 3). In other cases, the state may not be willing to take the risk of losing territory and only allow an arbitration vote on autonomy.

By contrast, exactly this willingness to compromise is lacking in the case of unilaterally initiated SD referendums. As argued in chapter 3, both states and SDMs can resort to unilateral SD referendums, if for varying purposes. States, on the one hand, may unilaterally call an SD referendum so as to de-legitimize a maximalist claim made by the separatists or to legitimate a minimal form of accommodation that is rejected by the separatists (state-sponsored referendums). On the other hand, SDMs mainly resort to unilateral referendums to showcase public support for their claims and thus exert pressure on their host state and elicit concessions (separatist-sponsored referendums). However, irrespectively of whether it is states or SDMs that unilaterally call referendums, these referendums represent attempts by the initiating side to push through its preferred outcome over the objections of the other side. Hence, unilateral SD referendums will be called in situations where states and SDMs fail to find common ground and, in particular, are unable to strike a deal on an agreed referendum.

In sum, then, agreed SD referendums presuppose a significant willingness to make compromises at least on the state side, but often on both sides, whereas this willingness to compromise is lacking in the case of unilateral SD referendums. This suggests an important first observation: Whereas agreed SD referendums should occur under conditions that make compromises between states and SDMs possible, unilateral SD referendums should occur under conditions that make compromise solutions unlikely.

However, asking for the conditions that facilitate (or prevent) compromises is not going to be sufficient to explain SD referendum occurrences. Self-rule settlements, for example, do not necessarily have to be ratified by popular vote. Slovakia gained its independence from Czechoslovakia without a referendum, and the Dayton Agreement, which ended the Bosnian Civil War, was concluded without a referendum. Analogously, there are ways other than arbitration referendums for states and SDMs to sort out an incompatibility, such as international mediation. There are also tactics other than unilateral referendums if states and SDMs cannot find a compromise solution. SDMs have a whole menu of tactics at their disposal by which they can attempt to change the government's mind, ranging from conventional politics to irregular nonviolent (demonstrations, for example) or violent tactics (Gurr 2000*b*). Unilateral SD referendums constitute but one such tactical choice. Finally, instead of calling a unilateral referendum, states may choose to suppress the separatists' demands using other repressive measures, or they may simply do nothing and ignore the claimants.

Therefore, in addition to asking for conditions that favor or prevent compromise, a model

of SD referendum occurrences has to consider factors that render the different types of SD referendums a feasible and attractive, or possibly even necessary, option. States and SDMs will only agree on an SD referendum if both sides think the benefits of having a referendum outweigh its costs. An obvious example emerges if there are legal requirements that force the parties to ratify a settlement with a popular referendum, which would render the referendum a necessary option. Conversely, the separatists will only search a unilateral popular mandate if they can mobilize sufficient popular support, if they consider this tactic to be potentially effective, and if they can stem the costs that may emerge, such as potential negative sanctions by the state. Finally, state leaders will only decide for a unilateral referendum if they feel a need to establish popular legitimacy for their position and if they are confident about their ability to win the referendum.

To sum up, occurrences of SD referendums are likely to be shaped by factors that are conducive to or prevent compromises, as well as by factors that render such referendums a feasible and attractive, or even necessary, choice. In the remainder of this section, I go on to identify a total of 13 factors that are likely to affect these parameters and derive empirically testable hypotheses for each of them. Throughout, I assume an ongoing SD dispute. That is, I explore the conditions under which SD referendums occur given that an ethnic group has already mobilized for self-rule. This can be justified as SD referendums almost by definition play out in the context of conflicts between states and movements for self-rule. The 13 determinants can be broadly grouped into four categories: characteristics of the host state, characteristics of the ethnic group on whose behalf SDMs make claims for self-rule, factors that affect the short-term dynamics of SD disputes, and diffusion mechanisms. A number of the factors that will be discussed, such as the level of democracy or constitutional provisions for referendums, have already been considered in previous works, though they are often newly interpreted to reflect the distinction between agreed and unilateral SD referendums and, where applicable, their respective sub-types. In addition, I draw on the more general literature on separatist and other contention to identify a number of new factors that have not yet been considered.

Before proceeding, an important caveat has to be mentioned. The present model of SD referendum occurrences was developed with an eye to it being suitable to cross-national large-N empirical testing. This precludes consideration of some potentially relevant explanatory factors, namely those for which no reliable cross-country measures are available. For example, it has been argued that states may decide to initiate a referendum on self-rule due to splits in the ruling

coalition, intending to use the referendum as a tool for mediation between the different factions (Denver, Mitchell, Pattie & Bochel 2000, Morel 2007). Testing this argument would require fine-grained data on the policy positions of different factions of ruling coalitions, but such data is not currently available cross-nationally. Another variable that is difficult to consider but is likely to matter for SD referendum occurrences is the level of public support for SD. For example, SDMs with only few followers will have a hard time to mobilize sufficient support for a convincing win in a unilateral referendum. They likely also have a harder time to wring out concessions from the state, and by implication they may see fewer agreed SD referendums.[5] However, reliable measures of SDMs' level of public support are often unavailable, especially in autocracies and for the times before the advent of regular mass surveys (Hechter 1992). Therefore, I am not going to consider the role of public opinion in the genesis of SD referendums any further. That said, the model in some ways indirectly accounts for the level of public support for SD by introducing several factors that are likely to be outflows and/or shape the level of public support for SD, including government repression and several behavioral correlates of significant support for self-rule, such as large-scale protest campaigns.

6.3.1 State Characteristics

The state constitutes one of the two primary actors to SD disputes. But not all states are the same. States vary along a number of important dimensions, and these variations are likely to affect probabilities for SD referendums. For example, while states generally seek to avert secessions, some states are much more willing than others to share powers with their regions, and this is likely to affect whether we see agreed SD referendums or unilateral ones. Further, as the literature on social movements reminds us, different states with different institutional settings provide very different environments for SDMs, thus shaping the form of state-movement interactions and opportunities for SD referendums (Tilly 1978, McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly 2001, Kriesi 2004). Finally, states also vary with regard to their disposition towards referendums as a means to settle political decisions. I here consider a total of four state characteristics likely to affect SD referendums, discussing them in turn: the level of democracy, the number of potential future self-rule challengers, as well as legal provisions for mandatory referendums and citizen's

[5]Not only the level of public support among the SD group is likely to matter, but also public opinion among the rest of a country's population. For example, state leaders can be expected to refrain from making self-rule concessions to a minority if this is opposed by the majority.

initiatives.

Level of Democracy

A country's level of democracy is likely to affect incidences of SD referendums in varying ways. First, there are good grounds to expect that agreed SD referendums should be more likely to occur in democratic regimes. Democracies are often ascribed with a culture of compromise (Kant 2013 [1795], Walter 2006*a*, Cunningham 2011). Many democracies, especially the established ones, also have historical patterns of peaceful conflict resolution and the use of conciliatory means to redress grievances (Gurr & Moore 1997, Gurr 2000*c*). Further, a country's level of democracy strongly determines the potential of individuals and social groups, including movements for self-rule, to influence government decision-making (Hegre et al. 2001, Shaykhutdinov 2010). Thus, all else equal, democracies are likely to be more responsive to the demands of minorities and have a higher willingness to make concessions to SDMs. Furthermore, conflict resolution by referendums tends to have higher acceptance in democratic societies (Altman 2011, He 2002, Qvortrup 2014*a*). Democracies are also more likely to provide separatists with the constitutional means to launch referendums on self-rule at their own discretion. For example, provisions allowing separatists to collect signatures for a citizen's initiative on self-rule, as they exist in Switzerland or Bolivia, are unlikely to exist in non-democracies. By implication, we should see more agreed SD referendums in democracies.

However, even democratic regimes do not accommodate all challengers. India, for example, responded violently to separatist challenges by the Kashmiri Muslims and the Nagas, while Britain fought the Irish. It appears reasonable to assume that democratic leaders who decide to disregard the demands of a separatist challenger seek a popular mandate. By contrast, authoritarian leaders should feel less compelled to have a proven popular mandate for repressive action. From this perspective, we would expect that also unilateral SD referendums initiated by states are more likely to occur in democracies.

Finally, there are reasons to expect that separatist-sponsored unilateral SD referendums are more likely to occur in anocracies (or semi-democracies) than in either full democracies or full autocracies. Harshly authoritarian states should see few separatist-sponsored referendums due to their high willingness and capacity to repress dissent (Davenport 1995, Poe, Tate & Keith 1999). The potentially severe costs faced by dissenters in autocracies is likely to discourage contentious action, such as a unilaterally invoked referendum (Tilly 1978, McAdam, Tarrow

& Tilly 2001, Gurr 2000*c*, Kriesi 2004, Meyer 2004). At the same time, a show of public support may be unlikely to change the minds of authoritarian leaders, thus decreasing the attractiveness of the unilateral referendum strategy. Conversely, a high level of democracy is likely to obviate the need for separatists to unilaterally call their own referendums; as noted, democracies tend to be of a more accommodative nature while providing separatists with other, less confrontational means to pursue their goals, such as petitions, running for office, or even constitutionally sanctioned referendums. In sum, then, both high and low levels of democracy are likely to inhibit separatist-sponsored referendums. By contrast, countries with medium levels of democracy (anocracies) should offer fertile ground for separatist-sponsored referendums. Anocracies are more repressive and less accessible than full democracies (Eisinger 1973, Tilly 1978, Hegre et al. 2001, Kriesi 2004). Thus, compared to democracies a mutually acceptable solution is less likely to be forthcoming in anocracies, creating incentives for separatists to unilaterally search a popular mandate. At the same time, anocracies are less repressive than full autocracies and at least partially founded on democratic principles. For separatist groupings this is likely to render a unilateral SD referendum a less risky and possibly more promising strategy. By implication, the relationship between the level of democracy and separatist-sponsored referendums is likely to follow an inverted U-shape.

> **H6.1:** A country's level of democracy should (a) be positively associated with incidences of agreed SD referendums as well as with incidences of unilateral SD referendums initiated by states. By contrast, (b) separatist-sponsored unilateral SD referendums should be more likely to occur in anocracies compared to both democracies and autocracies.

Future Challengers

One of the most prominent arguments in the literature on SD politics is that the dynamics of separatist conflicts are shaped by the number of SD challengers a state expects to face down the road (see e.g. Toft 2003, 2012, Walter 2003, 2006*a*, 2006*b*, 2009). Departing from market entry deterrence theory in economics, the future challenger argument holds that states can be wary of making concessions to SD challengers out of a fear that this might signal weakness and spur further challenges in the future from other groups demanding the same treatment. To avoid the high costs of future disputes, even conciliatory governments have incentives to misrepresent their willingness to negotiate if they expect that this might trigger other challenges down the

road. By implication, the more challengers the state expects to face in the future, the higher are its incentives to build a reputation for strength and crack down on the current challenger (Walter 2006*a*).

The reputation theory of separatist conflict suggests that if the number of potential future challengers is low, we should see many agreed SD referendums but few unilateral SD referendums, and vice versa. States that expect to face few, if any, future challengers do not have to invest in reputation building; thus, they have fewer strategic constraints to negotiate with separatists and will find it easier to agree to a settlement that grants the separatists increased self-rule (and may involve a ratification referendum) or to an arbitration referendum. By contrast, states should become less likely to strike a deal with an SD challenger if there are many other potential challengers down the line. States that expect many future challengers face strong incentives to invest in a reputation of strength. Thus, states with many future challengers should be inclined to reject maximalist separatist demands and more likely to opt for a unilateral referendum so as to legitimize their rejection of the separatists' demands and signal their resolve to other potential future challengers. Conversely, as they are less likely to receive concessions, separatists in states facing many other potential challengers in the future should have increased incentives for drastic measures, such as a unilateral referendum, so as to raise the stakes and force concessions despite governments' concerns about their reputation.[6]

> **H6.2:** A high number of potential future challengers should (a) decrease occurrences of agreed SD referendums but (b) increase occurrences of unilateral SD referendums.

Constitutional Provisions for Direct Democracy

The contention that institutional provisions for referendums should affect occurrences of SD referendums appears almost self-evident. I argue that two types of such provisions are particu-

[6]In some cases a high number of future challengers may also disincentivize separatists from launching a unilateral referendum. Walter (2006*b*) argues that ethnic groups should be less likely to challenge a state for self-rule if the state faces many other potential challengers, as states with many potential challengers will likely invest in their reputation and therefore refuse to make concessions. It may therefore be the case that separatists in states with many potential challengers should be wary of provoking the state with a unilaterally held referendum, given that the state is unlikely to make concessions in response and/or because the state is likely to respond violently so as to deter others. However, it is not clear to what extent Walter's argument applies to cases where a group has already challenged the state and is considering further actions, such as a unilateral referendum. Further, Walter's argument hinges on the assumption that ethnic groups are aware of the strategic constraints faced by states, which may or may not be the case. On balance, it appears more likely that the probability of separatist-sponsored referendums is shaped by state's unwillingness to make concessions if the number of potential future challengers is high.

larly likely to affect incidences of SD referendums. First, provisions for mandatory referendums should increase occurrences of both ratification referendums and state-sponsored referendums. If states and separatists manage to negotiate a settlement, provisions for mandatory referendums may leave them with little choice other than subjecting the settlement to the people. The 1979 referendum on the Basque Country's Autonomy Statute, which was required by the Spanish constitution, constitutes an example (Thompson 1989). The same may apply if states want to unilaterally push through a 'solution' to an SD dispute. Mindanao's 1989 referendum on an autonomy deal that was rejected by all of Mindanao's major separatist factions constitutes an example, given that this referendum was required by the Philippine's constitution (Johansson 2009). Meanwhile, provisions for mandatory referendums should not affect arbitration-type SD referendums or unilateral SD referendums initiated by separatists. Provisions for mandatory referendums can only trigger referendums once a legislative change has been adopted, which is by definition not the case for arbitration referendums and the illegally invoked separatist-sponsored referendums.

> **H6.3:** Provisions for mandatory referendums should (a) increase incidences of ratification and state-sponsored referendums, whereas (b) they should be unrelated to incidences of arbitration and separatist-sponsored SD referendums.

Second, provisions for citizen's initiatives can allow opposition groups to force an arbitration referendum. Bolivia, for example, voted in 2006 on a citizen-initiated proposal for departmental autonomy (Eaton 2011) and the Swiss canton of Bern voted in 1959 on a citizen-initiated proposal for the creation of a separate Jura canton (Buechi 2012). Provisions for citizen's initiatives should therefore increase occurrences of arbitration referendums. At the same time, the possibility to force a legal SD referendum by way of a citizen's initiative may also reduce the need for separatists to resort to unilateral SD referendums. No obvious relationship emerges with ratification and state-sponsored referendums. Ratification referendums are votes on settlements and cannot therefore be a direct result of citizen's initiatives, whereas state-sponsored referendums are by definition initiated by the authorities.

> **H6.4:** Provisions for citizen's initiatives should (a) increase occurrences of arbitration referendums, (b) decrease occurrences of separatist-sponsored referendums, and (c) be unrelated to ratification and state-sponsored SD referendums.

6.3.2 Group Characteristics

SDMs constitute the second primary actor to SD disputes. SDMs make self-rule claims on behalf of ethnic groups (the 'SD group'). The characteristics of these groups are likely to shape state-movement interactions, and by implication the propensity of SD referendums. SDMs representing different groups may behave differently, for example because some have less to fear from states than others or because they are treated differently by states. States may also respond differently to different groups, depending for example on the extent of costs a group can inflict on the state. A total of three group characteristics are considered in this study: the ethnic group's demographic size, government inclusion, and de facto independence.

Group Size

Group size can be seen as a structural determinant of the strength of SDMs, and is therefore likely to shape how governments respond to a self-rule challenge. Large groups tend to have bigger and stronger organizations compared to small groups, more financial resources, and better access to the state. Large groups can also draw on a larger pool of voters, fighters or protesters (Cederman, Buhaug & Rød 2009, Cederman, Wimmer & Min 2010). Large groups should therefore find it easier to inflict costs on the state. As states seek to minimize the costs that emerge from SD disputes, they should be more likely to make concessions to large groups (Cott, Donna Lee van 2001, Walter 2006*a*, Cunningham 2011). Accordingly, agreed SD referendums should become more likely as the demographic size of the challenging group increases.[7]

However, even large SD groups will not get accommodated all the time. If the government refuses to negotiate with separatists representing large SD groups, they should be more likely to call a unilateral referendum so as to force the state into accommodation. Small and therefore weak groups are unlikely to prevail in a violent conflict. Small groups should therefore refrain from provoking the state with an illegal referendum. By contrast, large groups have less to fear from the state.

Finally, there are grounds to expect that states target fewer unilateral referendums against large groups. Power in numbers has a deterrent effect; cracking down on large groups invokes

[7] An additional argument leading to the same conclusion is that states may also be more willing to accommodate the demands of large groups because they perceive them to be more legitimate.

a strong danger of a costly, protracted civil war for the state. By implication, states should be less likely to provoke large groups with an SD referendum initiated against their will so as to avoid widespread unrest.

> **H6.5:** The challenging group's demographic size should (a) be positively associated with occurrences of agreed SD referendums and separatist-sponsored referendums, but (b) be negatively associated with occurrences of state-sponsored referendums.

Government Inclusion

Another group characteristic that may influence occurrences of SD referendums is whether or not representatives of the ethnic group are included in the state's governing coalition. Groups that have access to the governing coalition are better able to make their voices heard and tend to have more sway with the government, especially if the continued existence of the governing coalition depends on their cooperation. Thus separatist groups with access to central state power should find it easier to extract concessions from the state (Cott, Donna Lee van 2001). It follows that we should see more agreed SD referendums when ethnic groups are included in the governing coalition. At the same time, it follows that included groups should be likely to avert SD referendums that are unilaterally pushed by the state against their will.

Conversely, governments will generally find it easier to ignore the self-rule demands of excluded groups. This may lay the groundwork for separatist-sponsored unilateral SD referendums. A second reason why political exclusion may increase the frequency of separatist-sponsored SD referendums is that political exclusion adds to perceptions of grievance against the state. All SD groups have some grievance about their status, but those SD groups that are excluded from central state power are likely to have a heightened sense of unfair treatment by the state. By definition, exclusion from central state power violates nationalism's basic principle, the rejection of alien rule (Gellner 1983, Hechter 2013). Exclusion from state power also implies a number of tangible disadvantages for members of the concerned group including deprivation of access to a range of material, political, and symbolic resources (Cederman, Gleditsch & Buhaug 2013, Wimmer, Cederman & Min 2009). Hence, denial of access to the central state may increase separatist sentiment among members of the separatist group and motivate contentious actions such as a unilateral referendum on self-rule.

> **H6.6:** Government inclusion should (a) increase the probabilities of agreed SD referendums, but (b) decrease the probabilities of unilateral SD referendums.

De Facto Independence

The third and final group characteristic included in this study is whether an SD group is de facto independent. De facto independence means that groups have effectively separated themselves from the institutions of their host state, often as a result of war, and de facto exercise control over their homeland while remaining unrecognized both by the official authorities of their host state and the international community (Caspersen 2012, Florea 2014). Prominent examples of de facto independent SD groups include the Abkhaz and the South Ossetians in Georgia, the Armenians in Azerbaijan, and the Slavs in Moldova's Transnistria region.

De facto independence could interact with the probability of SD referendums in varying ways. However, the clearest relationship is likely to emerge with SD referendums that are unilaterally pushed by separatist groups. De facto independent states are typically ruled by separatist elites with a strong interest in garnering international recognition and who are therefore seeking to demonstrate the legitimacy of their separatist demands (Caspersen 2012). There appear to be few better strategies to showcase public support for separation than a referendum. Furthermore, existing evidence suggests that the populations of de facto independent states often strongly support the goal of separation from their legal host state (O'Loughlin, Kolossov & Toal 2015). Thus, the leaders of de facto independent states can often draw on a favorable 'sentiment pool' (Snow, Burke Rochford, Worden & Benford 1986). This makes it likely that referendums come out strongly in favor of formal separation. Finally, by definition de facto independent states can act more or less autonomously from their host state. Thus the officially recognized authorities of the host state often have few, if any, opportunities to prevent a referendum from happening. Accordingly, there are strong grounds to expect that SD groups that have achieved de facto independence are more likely to launch unilateral referendums on self-rule.

In addition to favoring separatist-sponsored referendums, de facto independence is likely to limit the possibilities for states to unilaterally push SD referendums. The state lacks control over de facto independent territories. States cannot thus stage a referendum there against the will of the separatist leaders. This does not render state-sponsored unilateral SD referendums impossible. The Georgian government, for example, unilaterally staged a referendum promising South Ossetia autonomy in return for its reintegration into Georgia in the small part of South Ossetia still controlled by Georgia back in 2006 (Wheatley 2012). Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to expect that de facto independence reduces chances for state-sponsored SD referendums.

Finally, de facto independence may also affect the probability of agreed SD referendums,

though it is not clear how. De facto independent groups are in a strong bargaining position; they control their own territory and often also have external support (Florea 2014). The host state should thus be likely to offer concessions in return for their reintegration, which may trigger mutually agreed SD referendums. Gagauzia, for example, a small secessionist region in Moldova which had de facto separated from Moldova in 1991, voted in 1995 on an autonomy deal that brought it back under the helmet of the internationally recognized institutions of Moldova (Chinn & Roper 1998). However, at the same time, the leaders of de facto independent groups often also make radical demands for outright secession, which may prevent consensus on a mutually agreed SD referendum. Thus the net effect of de facto independence on the incidence of agreed SD referendums is ambiguous; it may be positive, negative, or zero. Given the lack of clear theoretical expectations I do not formulate a hypothesis here.

> **H6.7:** De facto independence should (a) increase the probability of separatist-sponsored referendums but (b) decrease the probability of state-sponsored referendums.

6.3.3 Dynamic Factors

Thus far the focus has been on characteristics of the state and ethnic groups and, by implication, on relatively static concepts. Variables such as the demographic size of groups, but also a country's regime type or whether the challenging group is included in a state's governing coalition rarely change fundamentally in the short term, implying clear limits in terms of their explanatory power. Structural variables (or structure-like variables, such as institutions) may explain where SD referendums tend to occur, but have limited explanatory leverage concerning their timing. For a fuller explanation of SD referendum occurrences, it is thus important to consider the dynamics of separatist conflicts; the actions and interactions by states and SDMs and specific events that may give rise to SD referendums. A total of four such dynamic factors will be considered: state repression, the type of claim advanced by SDMs, nonviolent protest, and separatist armed conflict.

State Repression

Repression constitutes one of the possible responses by states confronted with a self-rule challenger. State repression is likely to affect tactical choices by SDMs, such as whether to launch a unilateral referendum on self-rule. However, the effect of state repression is likely to be het-

erogeneous. The goal behind state repression is to raise the costs for collective action and thereby deter opposition activities (Tilly 1978, McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly 2001). Sometimes repression succeeds in this, and if so, separatists should become less likely to launch a unilateral referendum. However, in other cases repression fails to successfully deter dissenters and may even increase dissent (Lichbach 1987, Rasler 1996). State repression is likely to trigger strong emotional reactions (Petersen 2002) and to exacerbate grievances against the state (Cederman, Gleditsch & Buhaug 2013), therefore radicalizing opposition movements (Tarrow 1989). From this perspective, separatists should become more rather than less likely to call unilateral referendums on self-rule in the wake of state repression. The net effect of state repression is thus not fully clear. On balance, I expect state repression's effect on the incidence of separatist-sponsored referendums to be positive, especially if the state applies repression inconsistently (Lichbach 1987).

State repression may also affect the remaining types of SD referendums, if in a more indirect way. Governments that resort to repression are unlikely to change their behavior in the near future (Poe, Tate & Keith 1999). Agreed SD referendums should thus be unlikely to emerge in contexts where the state uses repression against a separatist challenger. Conversely, it is also reasonable to expect that states that have repressed a separatist challenger in the past also have a tendency towards provocative, unilateral referendums to contain the separatist threat.

> **H6.8:** Government repression should (a) increase incidences of unilateral SD referendums but (b) decrease incidences of agreed SD referendums.

Type of claim

SDMs can make a number of different claims against the state, ranging from relatively moderate claims for internal autonomy to more radical claims for outright secession. Moreover, the stated agendas of SDMs often change from one point to the next (Jenne, Saideman & Lowe 2007, Treisman 1997) (also see chapter 5). The Philippine Muslims, for example, have gone back and forth from autonomism to secessionism, as have the Kurds in Iraq (Horowitz 2003).[8] What kind of claim SDMs raise is likely to shape the dynamics of separatist conflicts, and thus also the probability of SD referendums. States value their territorial integrity and are thus likely to

[8]Moreover, different organizations within the same movement may make different claims against the state (Cunningham 2014).

feel more threatened by groups that claim outright secession as opposed to groups that demand only autonomy. By implication, we should see fewer agreed SD referendums but more unilateral SD referendums if SDMs demand outright secession.

States rarely agree to part with territory. If an SDM insists on outright secession, a settlement with the state should become unlikely and we should see fewer ratification referendums. States may have a higher propensity to agree to an arbitration referendum if SDMs insist on secession, especially if the state has reason to believe that it can win the contest. The Scottish independence referendum constitutes an example (see above). Nevertheless, generally speaking states should be more inclined to agree to an arbitration referendum if autonomy rather than secession is at stake. Referendum campaigns can be unpredictable. Even if the state thinks it can win an arbitration referendum dealing with secession, agreeing to one constitutes a significant gamble that states valuing their territorial integrity should prefer to avoid.

By contrast, if SDMs claim secession we should see more unilateral SD referendums. States feel more threatened by claims to secession. Thus they should become more likely to unilaterally call a referendum in an attempt to push through a limited form of accommodation in the hope that this might lower secessionist aspirations. Or they may unilaterally resort to an SD referendum in an attempt to de-legitimize the separatists' maximalist claim, purposefully designing the vote in a way that ensures a safe victory. The 1973 referendum in Northern Ireland on a possible merger with the Republic of Ireland, whose outcome was never in doubt given Northern Ireland's Protestant majority, constitutes an example (Bogdanor 1981*a*).

We should also expect that SDMs committed to the goal of secession are more likely to initiate unilateral SD referendums. States are unlikely to negotiate with groups that demand secession, providing an incentive for the separatists to showcase their desire to secede and thus force the state into negotiations. Groups demanding outright secession are also likely to be more radicalized, and may therefore have a higher propensity to resort to a highly contentious measure, such as an illegal referendum.

> **H6.9:** If SDMs claim outright secession this should (a) decrease incidences of agreed SD referendums but (b) increase incidences of unilateral SD referendums.

SDM Mobilization

The level of mobilization by SDMs is likely to strongly shape the dynamics of separatist conflict and, as a result, affect probabilities for SD referendums. Many SDMs are only weakly mobilized

and, as a consequence of this, find it difficult to bear significant pressure on the state. States can often safely ignore such groups. By contrast, when SDMs engage in disruptive activities, they are more difficult to ignore. These groups cause significant costs for the state, thus forcing it to respond in ways that may directly or indirectly lead to an agreed or a unilateral SD referendum.

I here consider the implications of two forms of mobilization: large-scale nonviolent protest and violent campaigns. When SDMs succeed in generating significant costs for the state by protesting or engaging in violent attacks, states will often want to find ways to decrease these costs (Cunningham 2014). One way of doing so is to offer concessions in the hope that this will calm the waves. Agreeing to an SD referendum may constitute part of such a strategy; for example, the state may agree to settle the issue via an arbitration referendum. Thus, nonviolent protest and violent attacks should increase chances for agreed SD referendums.

However, accommodation is not the only possible answer to protest and violence. States often respond to contentious behavior with repression (Davenport 1995, Davenport 2007). As already argued, state repression is likely to increase separatist sentiment and thus also the chances for separatist-sponsored referendums. At the same time, states confronted with nonviolent protest or violence may feel challenged in their legitimacy. This may give them an incentive to reestablish their legitimacy and their unwillingness to give in to the demands of the protesters or rebels via a unilateral SD referendum. Thus, nonviolent protest and violent attacks should also increase chances for unilateral SD referendums, be they initiated by states or SDMs.

Notably, there are reasons to expect that nonviolent tactics increase chances for SD referendums to a higher extent than violent tactics. Recent evidence suggests that states confronted with large-scale nonviolent protest campaigns are more likely to make concessions than states confronted with insurgencies (Stephan & Chenoweth 2008, Chenoweth & Stephan 2011). The argument is that nonviolent campaigns bring more pressure on the target regime due to their higher number of participants and the high legitimacy protest campaigns tend to enjoy as a result of the commitment to nonviolence.[9] If true, we should see more agreed SD referendums after nonviolent protest compared to violent conflict.

Conversely, if states nevertheless refuse to make meaningful concessions, SDMs that are

[9]Others, however, disagree and argue that violence is likely to be more effective than nonviolent protests (e.g. Arreguín-Toft 2005, Pape 2005).

able to organize large-scale protest campaigns should often find it relatively easy to organize a successful unilateral referendum. The organization of large-scale protest campaigns necessarily requires significant popular support—which at the same time constitutes an important prerequisite for a separatist-sponsored referendum-. Insurgents, by contrast, may not always have the same level of support. Nonviolent referendums may also be more to the liking of protesters. Several historic examples suggest a strong link between nonviolent protest and separatist-sponsored referendums, including Slovenia's 1990 independence referendum, the three Baltic republics' 1991 independence referendums, as well as Catalonia's more recent 2014 independence referendum (Brady & Kaplan 1994, Burg 2015).

Finally, as nonviolent protests constitute a higher threat to the legitimacy of states than insurgencies, states that are confronted with protests but are unwilling to give in may have a particularly high willingness to reestablish their legitimacy via a unilateral SD referendum. Gorbachev's decision to stage a union-wide referendum on the preservation of the Soviet Union in 1991, for example, occurred against the backdrop of prolonged, mostly nonviolent campaigns for secession in places like Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Georgia (Brady & Kaplan 1994). For all these reasons, it appears reasonable to expect that nonviolent protest campaigns disproportionately increase chances for both agreed and unilateral SD referendums in comparison to insurgencies.

> **H6.10:** Separatist armed conflict should increase occurrences of all types of SD referendums.
>
> **H6.11:** Nonviolent campaigns, even more so than separatist armed conflict, should increase occurrences of all types of SD referendums.

6.3.4 Diffusion

Finally, I consider diffusion mechanisms as an additional explanation for SD referendums. As shown in chapter 4, SD referendums cluster both in time and space. The number of SD referendums has increased rapidly over time, especially since the end of the Second World War. This holds true even when controlling for the increasing number of SD disputes. Further, chapter 4 showed that SD referendums constitute a much more prominent phenomenon in some regions of the world than in others. Europe, for example, has seen more than three times the number of SD referendums compared to Asia. It has also been that there are several temporally and geographically concentrated peaks of SD referendum activity. The wave of SD referendums

that swept through Eastern Europe in the early 1990s constitutes an example. All this strongly suggests that diffusion mechanisms are at play.[10]

Diffusion can be defined as the spread of an object, such as a policy, an idea, or an institution, within a social or political system (Gilardi 2012, Strang & Soule 1998). At the heart of the diffusion logic stands the recognition that social and political units are rarely independent of each other. Rather, social and political units tend to influence each other. Diffusion processes have been shown to operate for a wide set of social and political phenomena, including smoking bans (Shipan & Volden 2006), social insurance policies (Volden 2006), independent regulatory agencies (Gilardi 2005), and central bank independence (Polillo & Guillén 2005), but also the structure and content of constitutions (Elkins 2010), democratization (Gleditsch & Ward 2006), nonviolent protest (Beissinger 2002, Gleditsch & Rivera 2015), and civil war (Gleditsch 2007, Hegre & Sambanis 2006).

There are at least three mechanisms rendering the diffusion of SD referendums across time and space plausible. First, there are indications that we are witnessing the emergence of a new international norm requiring that the people has a direct stake in matters of SD. Peters (2015, pp. 263–264), for example, argues that "[c]ontemporary international law moves in the direction of requiring that all territorial realignments be democratically justified, and preferably through a direct democratic decision." Qvortrup (2014*b*, p. 60) similarly argues that "something approaching an international norm" has emerged since the end of the Cold War requiring that referendums should be held before secessions (also see Peters 1995, Radan 2012, Rudrakumaran 1989). While Qvortrup dates the emergence of this norm to the early 1990s, international interest in democratic forms of dealing with territorial question appears however to antedate the 1990s. For example, the United Nation's 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples explicitly affirmed that dependent entities should gain independence in accordance with the "freely expressed will and desire" of their peoples (Beigbeder 1994).

Second, but related to the first point, international institutions increasingly promote referendums as they intervene in SD disputes around the globe, especially since the end of the

[10]It should be added that the previously mentioned factors may to some extent account for the temporal and spatial clustering of SD referendums. For example, the SD referendum may have become an increasingly attractive and feasible tool due to the spread of democratic and in particular direct democratic institutions. However, this is unlikely to be the full story.

Cold War (Tierney 2012). Examples of internationally promoted SD referendums include the referendums in Bosnia (1992), East Timor (1999), Montenegro (2006), and South Sudan (2011).

Finally, there might be diffusion via learning and/or emulation (e.g. Beissinger 2002, 2007, Della Porta, Kriesi & Rucht 1999, Della Porta & Tarrow 2012, McAdam & Rucht 1993). Referendums in one context may serve as a blueprint in another context. Actors involved in SD disputes are likely to draw their inspiration from similar experiences elsewhere, and may copy tactics used in other comparable settings. For example, it is highly plausible that the snowballing of SD referendums in Eastern Europe in the early 1990s was in part due to emulation.

The different diffusion mechanisms have two core empirical implications. First, we should observe that the probability of SD referendums has increased over time, even when controlling for other explanatory factors. Assuming it is true that we witness an emerging norm requiring referendums before territorial changes, we should expect that participants in SD disputes increasingly internalize this new norm as time passes by and/or increasingly feel a moral or even legal obligation to refer self-rule questions to the people. Further, as argued above, the international community has become increasingly active in promoting SD referendums since the early 1990s, and learning and emulation can also be expected to occur more frequently as time transgresses and the number of precedents builds up. Crucially, temporal diffusion is likely to affect all types of SD referendums, irrespectively of whether they are consensually or unilaterally initiated. If states and SDMs increasingly come to see SD referendums as the appropriate mechanism to resolve SD disputes, they should be more likely to find mutual agreement on a ratification or arbitration referendum. However, they should also be more likely to see unilateral referendums as as the adequate means to establish legitimacy for their own position if they cannot find agreement on a referendum. Further, there is no obvious reason why learning or emulation should be constrained to certain types of referendums. Finally, while the international community mainly promotes agreed referendums, it has in at least one case (Bosnia) also promoted a unilateral referendum.

H6.12: Occurrences of all types of SD referendums should have increased over time.

However, the diffusion of SD referendums is likely to not only have a temporal, but also a spatial component. While modern technology means that information about events such as SD referendums can reach individuals across the globe more or less instantaneously, information from more similar, spatially close contexts is generally more familiar and judged to be more relevant. Thus, learning or emulation is more likely to occur in geographically close settings

(Tobler 1970, Beissinger 2007, Gleditsch & Rivera 2015). By implication, the probability of SD referendums should depend on the number of available precedents in other, spatially proximate countries.

> **H6.13:** Occurrences of all types of SD referendums should increase the higher the number of previous SD referendums in spatially proximate countries.

Having stated my theoretical expectations, I now turn to a discussion of the data and methods used to test their validity.

6.4 Data and Methods

To assess my hypotheses on the determinants of SD referendum I conduct a large-N study of all noncolonial SD disputes in European and Asian countries from 1945 to 2012. I identify SD disputes on the basis of the Self-Determination Movements-Eurasia (SDM-Eurasia) dataset introduced in chapter 5 (Sambanis, Germann & Schädel 2016, Germann, Sambanis & Schädel 2016). The unit of analysis is the dispute-year, which is defined as the dyad between an SDM and its host state in a given calendar year (for example, Scots-United Kingdom-2012).

The SDM-Eurasia dataset is highly suited to my analytical purposes. SD referendums can only occur in the context of an ongoing SD dispute, and all hypotheses stated above implicitly assume an ongoing separatist conflict. Thus, the model is best tested on the basis of data on active SD disputes, as it is provided by SDM-Eurasia. Furthermore, the SDM-Eurasia dataset contains measures for several of the group-level and dynamic factors of interest (see below). While the respective dynamics could not be captured in an aggregated country-level analysis, other datasets coding SD disputes, such as MAR or CIDCM, do not offer information for all concepts of interest (such as de facto independence or state repression). Finally, SDM-Eurasia overcomes selection issues inherent to previous efforts to code SD disputes. As discussed in chapter 5, the two main data sources currently in use both over-represent violent movements as well as movements in less developed and less democratic countries. This skewed data coverage is likely to translate into biased inferences (Hug 2003, Hug 2013). As it is based on on a much broader survey of the existing literature on SD disputes, the SDM-Eurasia dataset offers significantly improved coverage of noncolonial SD disputes, thus reducing selection issues.

While the SDM-Eurasia dataset has important advantages, we should not, however, forget that it also has an important disadvantage: several of the variables of interest are only available

for SD disputes in European and Asian countries. By implication, the findings are not necessarily generalizable to SD disputes in other parts of the world. That said, almost two thirds of all noncolonial SD disputes in 1945–2012 are located in Europe or Asia (62%), whereas more than two thirds of all noncolonial SD referendums in 1945–2012 were held in Europe or Asia (69%).[11]

While some of the totally 13 explanatory factors suggested above are hypothesized to have uniform effects on the different types of SD referendums (see H6.10–H6.13), others are hypothesized to have varying effects on unilateral and agreed SD referendums (see H6.2, H6.6, H6.8, and H6.9), and still others are hypothesized to have varying implications for the different sub-types of agreed and unilateral SD referendums (see H6.1, H6.3–H6.5, and H6.7). To test the different hypotheses, I therefore estimate four separate regression models explaining incidences of ratification, arbitration, separatist-sponsored, and state-sponsored SD referendums, respectively.[12]

In all four models the dependent variable is a binary that takes the value 1 if there was an SD referendum of a given type in a dispute-year, 0 otherwise. The data on SD referendums was extracted from the Contested Sovereignty dataset (Mendez & Germann 2016), as described in chapter 4, and then amalgamated with the SDM-Eurasia dataset. SD referendums were assigned to a dispute-year if the self-rule question that is voted on directly concerned the state and SDM in question. Note that in a small number of cases the same SD referendum was assigned to more than one SD dispute. For example, the Soviet Union's 1991 all-union referendum, which Gorbachev called to legitimize the preservation of the Soviet Union, is linked to a total of six secessionist SDMs in the Soviet Union (the Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Armenians, Georgians, and the Moldovans). There are just two such cases in the Eurasian sample. Both represent state-sponsored referendums. Below I also show results if these cases are dropped from the analysis. Further, in a small number of cases there were multiple referendums of the same type in the same dispute-year. For example, in 1975 the Jurassians-Switzerland dyad saw multiple arbitration-type SD referendums that were held to demarcate the territory of the new

[11]It should be noted that the SDM-Eurasia dataset also includes a fully randomized sample of SD disputes worldwide. However, for the present purposes the Eurasian sample is better suited because the random sample is too small and includes too few SD referendums for robust statistical analyses.

[12]I do not estimate a joint multinomial model because the different types of SD referendums are not mutually exclusive. That is, it is possible that the same dispute-year sees different types of SD referendums. Empirically, this is rare, but it does happen. For example, in 1991 the Lithuanians-Soviet Union dyad includes both a state-sponsored SD referendum (Gorbachev's all-union referendum) and a separatist-sponsored SD referendum (see Brady & Kaplan 1994).

Table 6.1: Summary statistics for the dependent variables

Referendum type	**Number of referendums**	**Corresponding number of dispute-years**	**Total number of dispute-years**	**%**
Ratification (agreed)	30	29	8746	0.33
Arbitration (agreed)	22	19	8746	0.22
Separatist-sponsored (unilateral)	45	45	8746	0.51
State-sponsored (unilateral)	13	18	8746	0.21

Jura canton that was about to be created. If this is the case, the respective referendum dummy is nevertheless coded with 1. All in all, this concerns a total of 5 dispute-years in the Eurasian sample.[13]

Table 6.1 gives summary statistics for the four dependent variables. The number of referendums and the corresponding number of dispute-years varies for the stated reasons. All four types of SD referendums under consideration constitute rare events; the chances of an incident of a given referendum type in a given dispute-year are invariably below 1%.[14]

I now turn to the measurement of the independent variables. Table 6.2 shows descriptive statistics for all independent variables.

To test H6.1, referring to the level of democracy, I include the combined polity2 index from the Polity IV dataset (Marshall, Gurr & Jaggers 2014).[15] The combined polity2 index ranges from -10 (full autocracy) to +10 (full democracy). In the model explaining the incidence of

[13]It should be noted that a total of three noncolonial SD referendums held between 1945 and 2012 cannot be linked to the SDM-Eurasia dataset. This includes two referendums held in 1945 and 1947 in Tende and La Brigue, two municipalities that were transferred from Italy to France after World War Two. The SDM-Eurasia dataset does not include this dispute. Further, Mongolia's 1945 independence referendum cannot be linked to the SDM-Eurasia dataset as SDM-Eurasia considers Mongolia independent by 1945. Mongolia's date of independence is ambiguous; while most peg it to 1921, China retained its claim to Mongolia until after the 1945 referendum. As SDM-Eurasia considers Mongolia independent by 1945, it does not code an active SD dispute between China and Mongolia in 1945.

[14]Given these small numbers, an alternative strategy would be to combine the different types of agreed and unilateral SD referendums and estimate two models, one for agreed and one for unilateral SD referendums. However, several hypotheses lead to different expectations for the different types of agreed and unilateral SD referendums (see above). Combining the different types of agreed and unilateral SD referendums would necessarily imply that the relevant hypotheses cannot be tested. That said, this may be less of a problem for agreed SD referendums. While several hypotheses lead to different expectations for the two types of unilateral SD referendums, only H6.2 and H6.3 lead to different expectations for ratification and arbitration referendums. The results remain similar if the different types of agreed SD referendums are combined.

[15]I imputed selected missing country-years in countries' immediate post-independence phase using leads (that is, the first value that is available in a country series).

Table 6.2: Summary statistics for the independent variables

Variable	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**Min.**	**Max.**	**Obs.**
$\text{Democracy}_{t\text{-}1}$	4.41	6.57	-10	10	8648
$\text{Democracy}_{t\text{-}1}{}^2$	62.63	31.42	0	100	8648
Mandatory referendum $\text{provisions}_{t\text{-}1}$	0.55	0.54	0	2	8746
Citizen's initiative $\text{provisions}_{t\text{-}1}$	0.14	*n.a.*	0	1	8746
Number of ethnic groups	6.11	3.83	1	13	8685
ln(group size)	-4.44	1.95	-10.41	-0.2	8746
Government inclusion	0.25	*n.a.*	0	1	8746
De facto independence	0.05	*n.a.*	0	1	8746
$\text{Government repression}_{t\text{-}1}$	0.05	*n.a.*	0	1	8746
Secession claim	0.3	*n.a.*	0	1	8746
$\text{Separatist armed conflict}_{t\text{-}1}$	0.17	*n.a.*	0	1	8746
$\text{Nonviolent campaign}_{t\text{-}1}$	0.01	*n.a.*	0	1	8746
Year = 1970-1990	0.3	*n.a.*	0	1	8746
Year = 1991-2012	0.53	*n.a.*	0	1	8746
Number of nearby SD referendums	32.77	28.61	0	108	8746
Referendum years (ratification)	20.36	16.25	0	67	8746
Referendum years (ratification)^2	678.84	927.37	0	4489	8746
Referendum years (ratification)^3	28169.58	52476.05	0	300763	8746
Referendum years (arbitration)	21.11	16.64	0	67	8746
Referendum years (arbitration)^2	722.26	962.43	0	4489	8746
Referendum years (arbitration)^3	30512.5	54896.18	0	300763	8746
Referendum years (separatist-sponsored)	20.87	16.68	0	67	8746
Referendum years (separatist-sponsored)^2	714.06	960.6	0	4489	8746
Referendum years (separatist-sponsored)^3	30183.46	54673.66	0	300763	8746
Referendum years (state-sponsored)	21.05	16.64	0	67	8746
Referendum years (state-sponsored)^2	720.12	963.58	0	4489	8746
Referendum years (state-sponsored)^3	30447.02	55050.44	0	300763	8746

separatist-sponsored SD referendums I add the square of the polity2 index so as to model the hypothesized inverted U-curve relationship (H6.1b). Both democracy and democracy squared are lagged one year except in a country's first year of independence to counter possible reverse causality and simultaneity bias.

Following Walter (2006*a*), I proxy for the number of potential future challengers (H6.2) with the number of ethnic groups in a country. No doubt, the number of ethnic groups in a country constitutes a relatively crude proxy for the number of challengers governments expect to face down the road. However, the number of potential future challengers cannot be directly observed, and the assumption that there is a correlation with the number of ethnic groups in a country appears tenable. My main source of data for the number of ethnic groups is Fearon (2003), who identifies all ethnic groups that make up at least 1% of a country's population

in the early 1990s,[16] complemented with data from the CIA World Factbook in selected cases (Central Intelligence Agency 2016).[17]

Ideally, H6.3 would be tested with data capturing whether a country requires mandatory referendums for legislative proposals relating to self-rule, while H6.4 would ideally be tested with data capturing whether a country allows citizen's initiatives dealing with self-rule. Unfortunately, such data is not available. Instead, I use measures that capture the existence of provisions for mandatory referendums and citizen's initiatives in a general sense, that is, whether or not they apply to self-rule questions. Specifically, I measure mandatory referendum provisions (H6.3) using an ordinal variable that is coded 0 if a country lacks any type of provisions for mandatory constitutional referendums, 1 if some, but not all, constitutional questions are subject to mandatory referendums, and 2 if all constitutional questions are subject to mandatory referendums. I measure provisions for citizen's initiatives (H6.4) with a dummy that flags whether a country has provisions for referendums that are placed on the ballot through a citizen petition and concern the adoption of a new law or constitutional amendment. The data for both variables is drawn from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project (Coppedge et al. 2015, Altman 2015).[18] Both variables are lagged one year except in a country's first year of independence.

To test H6.5 about the demographic size of SD groups I use the natural logarithm of an SD group's population as a share of the country's total population. The data is culled from the SDM-Eurasia dataset (see chapter 5 for more details). I use relative rather than absolute population figures because relative figures better capture a group's strength vis-á-vis the state. For example, with a population of approximately 4 million the Walloons constitute a sizable (and

[16]The main advantage of Fearon's data is that it considers ethnic groups irrespectively of whether they are mobilized. Other prominent datasets, including the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) dataset (Wimmer, Cederman & Min 2009, Cederman, Wimmer & Min 2010, Vogt et al. 2015), only code groups if they are politically relevant, that is, have political organization or are discriminated against. However, the number of politically relevant groups in a country is likely to be endogenous to regime behavior and, by implication, to SD referendums.

[17]Given that Fearon's data reflects the situation in the early 1990s it can be problematic for countries that have undergone major territorial changes before or after this. To correct for this, I combined Fearon's data for China with his data for Taiwan in the 1945–1949 period, and his data for Pakistan with his data for Bangladesh for the 1945–1971 period. Furthermore, I updated Fearon's data for Serbia in the 2007–2012 period (Montenegro and Kosovo seceded from Serbia in 2006 and 2008, respectively), based on information provided in the CIA World Factbook. Despite East Timor's secession in 2002, I left Indonesia as is because the East Timorese made up less than 1% of Indonesia's population. Finally, drawing on the CIA World Factbook I added data for Montenegro and Kosovo.

[18]The two variables in question are v2ddvotcon and v2ddlegci. Note that I recoded v2ddlegci. V-Dem codes v2ddlegci with 1 or 2 depending on whether the citizen's initiatives are binding or not. I coded the variable with 1 irrespectively of the legal implications of citizen's initiatives.

therefore strong) minority in Belgium, whose total population is about 11 million, but would constitute only a small (and relatively weak) minority in a country such as India with a total population of more than 1.2 billion. I log-transform the SD group's relative demographic size because fluctuations at the lower end of the scale are likely to matter more than fluctuations at the upper end of the scale. For example, it is likely to matter more whether a group constitutes 1% or 5% of a country's population compared to whether a group makes up 31% or 35% of the total population.[19]

I measure government inclusion (H6.6) with a dummy denoting whether members of a given SD group have meaningful representation in the national executive. Depending on the country, this may be the presidency, the cabinet, senior posts in the administration, and/or the army. The data for this variable is taken from SDM-Eurasia. Note that SDM-Eurasia culls data on government inclusion directly from the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) project (Wimmer, Cederman & Min 2009, Cederman, Wimmer & Min 2010, Vogt et al. 2015) when there is correspondence between an SD group and one of the ethnic groups coded in the EPR dataset.[20] The Basques in Spain, who are represented in both datasets, constitute an example. If there is no correspondence between SDM-Eurasia and EPR, government inclusion is coded on the basis of original research.

To test H6.7, relating to de facto independence, I include a dummy capturing whether an SD group has unilaterally withdrawn from the institutions of its host state and de facto exercises control over its homeland, or at least a significant share thereof. Cases where rebels hold small swaths of territory are not included. Again, the data for this variable stems from the SDM-Eurasia dataset.

Following Sambanis & Zinn (2004), I operationalize government repression (H6.8) using a dummy that tracks curtailments of group rights by the state in the previous calendar year. The measure is constructed based on data from the SDM-Eurasia dataset and accounts for several different forms of status demotions: the overturning of a previously granted level of autonomy to a group (Hechter 2000), but also restrictions of cultural rights, such as policies

[19]Note that all group characteristics reflect the situation on January 1 of each calendar year and need not therefore be lagged. Exceptions apply if the situation on January 1 is not meaningful, for example if a country had not been independent by January 1 of a given calendar year. In such cases SDM-Eurasia records the situation on the earliest meaningful date during the ongoing year.

[20]The same applies to SD groups' demographic size.

that decrease a group's linguistic or religious rights, and cases where a group loses some or even all representation in the national executive (Cederman, Wimmer & Min 2010). It also includes cases of annexation by a foreign power, such as Indonesia's annexation of East Timor in 1975. It should be noted that government-induced status demotions are not, of course, the only form of government repression. Other forms of repression of separatist groups include the harassment of dissidents, arrests, bans of separatist parties, torture, and mass killings (Davenport 2007). However, while measures for concepts such as government violations of physical integrity rights are readily available at the country level (Cingranelli, Richards & Clay 2014, Wood & Gibney 2010), similar data is currently unavailable at the level of separatist groups. That said, curtailments of group rights constitute an especially relevant dimension of state repression in the context of SD conflicts that should be particularly likely to induce the sort of mechanisms hinted at above. Status demotions are likely to trigger strong emotional reactions by members of the affected group, increase perceptions of discriminatory treatment by the state, and spur a willingness to "reverse the reversal" (Cederman, Gleditsch & Buhaug 2013, Petersen 2002). Such downgrades should thus be likely to increase the incidence of unilaterally initiated, separatist-sponsored referendums (H6.8a). Kosovo's 1991 independence referendum constitutes an exemplary case, as it occurred in the wake of Serbia's revocation of the Kosovar Albanians' autonomy rights in 1989/1990 (Pula 2004, Minorities at Risk Project 2009). At the same time it is also plausible to expect that states that curtail a group's rights are likely to target a unilateral referendum against this group. Gorbachev's 1991 all-union referendum constitutes an example. Before resorting to a unilateral referendum, Gorbachev had tried other forms of repression against the various secessionist movements threatening to break up the Soviet Union, including a blockade of Lithuania's, whereby he scrapped the shipment of oil and gasoline and cut natural gas deliveries (Solnick 1996, p. 223), which can be seen as a restriction of the group's autonomy rights. Finally, there are strong ex-ante grounds to expect that states that refrain from such tactics are more likely to find agreement with the separatists on an agreed SD referendum (H6.8b).

To measure the type of self-rule claim made by SDMs (H6.9), I include a binary variable that is coded 1 if representatives of an SDM dominantly make claims for outright secession in a given year, and 0 if the dominant claim was for more regional (internal) autonomy. The claims variable is derived from the SDM-Eurasia dataset and is coded so that it reflects the situation on January

1 of each calendar year.[21] Both claims for national independence and claims for secession from one state to join another state are counted as secession claims. Importantly, the claims dummy tracks the *dominant* claims of SDMs. It is often the case that different representatives of the same movement make different claims. For example, whereas Convergence and Union (CiU), a Catalan separatist party, traditionally demanded increased autonomy, the Catalan Republican Left (ERC), another Catalan separatist party, traditionally demanded independence (Guibernau 1999, Keating 1996). The claims variable records the claim that is made by the majority and/or the strongest representatives of a movement. In the Catalan case the majority of factions, including CiU, claimed autonomy until about 2010, when the dominant claim shifted to independence. Accordingly, the claims variable is coded with autonomy until and including 2010, and with secession in 2011–2012 (see chapter 5 for additional details on the coding of self-rule claims).

To evaluate H6.10, relating to violent conflict, I include a dummy that is coded 1 if the previous dispute-year saw an incident of separatist armed conflict between the respective SDM and its host state. The measure, which is again derived from SDM-Eurasia, includes both cases of high-level armed conflicts (civil wars) with hundreds if not thousands of casualties and low-level armed conflicts with significantly fewer deaths. Only armed conflicts that involve the goals of secession or autonomy are included. Refer to chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion of SDM-Eurasia's separatist armed conflict measure.

To evaluate H6.11, referring to nonviolent protest, I include a dummy that flags dispute-years with 1 if the previous dispute-year saw a large-scale nonviolent campaign by the SDM in question raising demands for increased self-rule. The main source for this variable is the Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes (NAVCO) dataset, version 2.0 (Chenoweth & Lewis 2013*b*). NAVCO defines a campaign as "a series of observable, continuous, purposive mass tactics or events in pursuit of a political objective" involving "at least 1,000 observed participants and a coherent organization linking tactics to one another over time" (Chenoweth & Lewis 2013*a*, p. 2). The measure used here includes all NAVCO campaigns that fulfilled the following three conditions. First, their primary resistance method was nonviolent. The NAVCO dataset also includes violent challenges, but these were dropped. Second, increased self-rule must range among the demands raised by a campaign. NAVCO also includes campaigns

[21] The exceptions noted above apply (footnote 19).

that were aimed at other goals, such as regime change. These were dropped.[22] Third, as the SDM-Eurasia dataset only considers noncololonial SD challenges, I dropped all colonial SD challenges identified by NAVCO. All cases fulfilling these three conditions were then matched to the respective dispute-years.

For the present purposes, an important limitation of the NAVCO data is that it only covers the years 1945–2006, while the SDM-Eurasia dataset covers the years 1945–2012. To get data on nonviolent campaigns for the remaining years, I consulted the Global Nonviolent Action Database (Lakey 2011), an online resource that provides narratives of more than 1,100 nonviolent protest campaigns around the world going back before 1945 and up to and including 2015. Most of the narratives were written by students at Swarthmore College and Tufts University in the context of research seminars. I proceeded by reading the case descriptions of all 207 cases that were tagged as involving "National/ethnic identity," adding all cases that based on the narrative fulfilled NAVCO's definition of a nonviolent campaign and involved claims for increased self-rule. Most of the cases turned out to be of lesser significance. All in all, I found 4 cases that fulfilled the definitional requirements in years that are missed by NAVCO. I found another 7 cases that appeared to fulfil the definitional requirements and, while occuring during the period covered by NAVCO, were missing. For example, the Global Nonviolent Action Database provides credible evidence that there was a large-scale and primarily nonviolent campaign related to the status of Nagorno-Karabakh in 1988, with thousands of protesters in both Karabakh itself and Armenia. I added these 6 cases as well.[23]

To capture the temporal diffusion of SD referendums hypothesized in H6.12 I include two dummies, one that flags the years 1970–1990 and one that flags the post-Cold War period (1991–2012). 1945–1969 serves as the reference category. Finally, to capture the spatio-temporal diffusion mechanism suggested by H6.13 I include a count of the number of SD referendums

[22]The NAVCO dataset only records the primary goal of a campaign. This can be problematic, as campaigns can have more than one goal. For example, NAVCO records the primary goal of the 1970–1971 Croatian Spring with "policy change." However, the Croatian Spring featured a number of demands, including democratization and economic reforms, but also increased autonomy for Croatia (Benson 2004, Pickering & Baskin 2008). Therefore, I went through all nonviolent campaigns and checked on a case-by-case basis whether they involved claims for increased self-rule.

[23]In another 3 cases the narratives suggested an alternative campaign start or end date; for example, while NAVCO suggests that Lithuania's Singing Revolution began in 1989, the Global Nonviolent Action Database provides sufficient evidence that all definitional requirements had already been fulfilled in 1988. I added this information as well. Additional research led to the inclusion of one further case, Catalonia's nonviolent campaign for autonomy/independence starting in 2010 (see The Economist 2014).

that have previously been held in other but spatially close countries. I consider two countries spatially connected if their minimal distance is maximally 900 kilometers, that is, if the distance between two countries at the two points where they are closest to each other does not exceed 900 kilometers. I calculated minimum distances between countries using the cshapes package (Weidmann, Kuse & Gleditsch 2010, Weidmann & Gleditsch 2010). By definition, countries are considered to be unconnected to themselves. The count of the number of nearby SD referendums equals the total number of SD referendums held in connected countries up to and including the preceding calendar year. I include only noncolonial SD referendums in the count; that is, SD referendums held on the autonomy or independence of colonial entities are not included.

Having discussed the measurement, I now turn to the estimation method. SD referendum occurrences constitute binary events, which suggests a log-linear estimator designed for binary outcomes, such as logit or probit regression (Aldrich & Nelson 1984, Long 1997). However, log-linear estimators are problematic in the present case because there is separation. The ideal case for log-linear estimators is overlap. Overlap occurs when no regressor (or combination of regressors) perfectly explains zeros or ones. With overlap, maximum likelihood estimates exist and provide reasonable parameter estimates. In contrast, under separation finite maximum likelihood estimates do not exist. Separation emerges if a regressor (or a combination of regressors) perfectly explains both zeros and ones (complete separation) or if a regressor (or a combination of regressors) perfectly explains either zeros or ones, but not both (quasicomplete separation) (Albert & Anderson 1984, Rainey 2016, Zorn 2005). In the present case, several regressors imply quasicomplete separation. On the one hand, there are no ratification or state-sponsored referendums in the sample that occurred prior to 1970. By implication, the combination of the time dummies perfectly explains non-occurrences of ratification and state-sponsored referendums (as stated above, the two time dummies capture the 1970–1990 and 1991–2012 periods, respectively). On the other hand, there was not a single arbitration referendum in the year after an act of state repression as defined above. Thus repression perfectly explains non-occurrences of arbitration referendums.[24] The implication is that log-linear estimators yield invalid estimates for the offending regressors (Rainey 2016).

To avoid problems related to quasicomplete separation, I estimate all models with ordinary least squares (OLS). The application of OLS to binary outcomes is often also referred to as lin-

[24]Note that these findings imply strong support for H6.8b and H6.12, respectively.

ear probability models (LPMs). In the present case, the main advantage of LPMs is that OLS, given its linear link function, can extrapolate to the region of interest even if there is quasicomplete separation (Heinze & Schemper 2002, Heinze 2006). Thus, unlike log-linear estimators, OLS provides valid estimates for variables affected by quasicomplete separation.[25] Of course, as is well-known, LPMs raise several other issues (e.g. Aldrich & Nelson 1984). When applied to binary outcomes, OLS can lead to nonsensical predictions implying negative probabilities or probabilities above one. Further, binary responses by definition lead to violations of OLS' assumption of homoskedastic errors. However, methodologists increasingly recognize that the issues with LPMs are not as big as they used to be portrayed. It is true that LPMs can lead to nonsensical predictions, but this is less of a problem if the interest, as is the case here, is in the partial effects of explanatory variables (Wooldridge 2010, p. 563). Log-linear estimators tend to yield more accurate parameter estimates, but the differences are usually small and not of substantive importance (Angrist & Pischke 2009, Beck 2015). Further, there are standard and easy-to-apply fixes for heteroskedasticity: heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors (Wooldridge 2010, p. 562). While log-linear models are thus to be preferred in principle, LPMs can be justified if they facilitate tricky estimation issues (Beck 2015). Economists, for example, frequently estimate LPMs because they facilitate the inclusion of fixed effects (Beck 2011). Political scientists less frequently resort to LPMs, but there are prominent exception (see e.g. Besley & Reynal-Querol 2011, Hainmueller & Hangartner 2013). In the present case, the benefits of OLS (no invalid estimates due to quasicomplete separation) appear to outweigh its costs (mainly in terms of slightly less accurate parameter cases). For this reason, I estimate all models with OLS, employing heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors as suggested by Wooldridge (while also clustering standard errors by the SD dispute, see below). In the robustness section, I also present results based on logit regression. The results are similar, with the obvious exception of those variables that suffer from quasicomplete separation.

[25] An alternative solution to quasicomplete is to incorporate prior information in a Bayesian-style analysis. A number of different prior distributions have been proposed, including Jeffrey's invariant prior (Heinze & Schemper 2002, Zorn 2005, Rainey 2016) and a weakly informative Cauchy prior (Gelman, Jakulin, Pittau & Su 2008). However, these approaches have a number of important shortcomings. Bayesian approaches leave the framework of classical statistics. Standard fixes for temporal dependence (clustering standard errors) become difficult to implement. Standard methods to derive quantities of interest perform poorly. And, most importantly, results are strongly determined by the choice of prior (Rainey 2016). Thus, conclusions about the effects of explanatory variables affected by quasicomplete separation strongly depend on often arbitrary assumptions about the prior distribution. By contrast, estimation by OLS is straightforward, allows for standard fixes to temporal dependence and standard derivation of quantities of interest, and generates effect estimates for variables affected by quasicomplete separation on the basis of standard and well-known assumptions.

Crucially, in all models we observe the same units over time (SD disputes between a given ethnic group and a given host state). As this is likely to induce temporal dependence, the assumption of independent observations is likely to be violated (Beck, Katz & Tucker 1998). To account for temporal dependence, I include cubic polynomials counting either the number of calendar years since the start of an SD dispute or, if an SD dispute saw a given type of SD referendum in the past, the number of calendar years since the last referendum (Carter & Signorino 2010). 1945 is coded with 0 by definition.[26] I refer to the cubic polynomials as 'referendum years.' Furthermore, I cluster all standard errors at the level of the SD dispute (for example, Scots-United Kingdom).

6.5 Results

Having described the research design and measurement, we are now ready to evaluate our hypotheses. Before delving into the details, it should be stressed that the nature of this inquiry is best described as correlational. I simultaneously focus on many potential determinants of SD referendums, which makes it difficult to account for all potential confounders, and thus to isolate causal effects. Despite this limitation, my approach has value because no other study has tested for such a broad set of potential determinants of SD referendums based on disaggregated data on SD disputes while making a distinction between (different types of) agreed and unilateral SD referendums.

Table 6.3 presents the main results. Models 1 and 2 show the results for ratification and arbitration referendums, whereas models 3 and 4 show the results for unilateral SD referendums initiated by separatists and states, respectively. The specification is the same across all models, with the following two exceptions. First, to test the curvilinear relationship between the level of democracy and separatist-sponsored referendums suggested in H6.1b, model 2 includes both the linear and squared terms of democracy, whereas the other models only include the linear term. Second, as the four models explain different types of SD referendums, all feature different versions of the cubed referendum year polynomials. All coefficients are based on OLS regression, with heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors clustered at the SD dispute level in brackets.

[26] If an SD group changes its host state, the count continues where it left off under the old host state. For example, the Hungarian SDM in Slovakia started in 1989, when Slovakia was still part of Czechoslovakia. Slovakia became independent 1993, and since there was no SD referendum that concerned the Hungarians between 1989 and 1993, the count begins with 4.

Table 6.3: Explaining SD referendums in European and Asian countries, 1945–2012

	(1) Ratification referendums	(2) Arbitration referendums	(3) Separatist-sponsored referendums	(4) State-sponsored referendums
State characteristics				
Democracy$_{t-1}$	0.0003***	0.0002**	0.0003	0.0001
	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0002)	(0.0001)
Democracy$_{t-1}^2$			−0.0001***	
			(0.0001)	
Number of ethnic groups	0.0006**	0.0002	0.0007**	0.0003
	(0.0003)	(0.0003)	(0.0003)	(0.0003)
Mandatory referendum provisions$_{t-1}$	0.0036*	0.0039	0.0016	0.0034**
	(0.0020)	(0.0024)	(0.0020)	(0.0014)
Citizen's initiative provisions$_{t-1}$	−0.0091***	0.0000	−0.0105*	0.0005
	(0.0027)	(0.0029)	(0.0054)	(0.0040)
Group characteristics				
ln(group size)	0.0003	0.0007*	0.0014***	0.0002
	(0.0004)	(0.0004)	(0.0005)	(0.0003)
Government inclusion	0.0009	−0.0017	0.0012	−0.0018
	(0.0022)	(0.0016)	(0.0023)	(0.0013)
De facto independence	−0.0010	0.0008	0.0266***	−0.0018
	(0.0032)	(0.0027)	(0.0084)	(0.0032)
Dynamic factors				
Government repression$_{t-1}$	0.0006	−0.0028***	0.0143**	0.0059
	(0.0025)	(0.0009)	(0.0067)	(0.0047)
Secession claim	0.0048**	−0.0001	0.0059***	0.0037**
	(0.0023)	(0.0012)	(0.0022)	(0.0015)
Separatist armed conflict$_{t-1}$	0.0017	−0.0013	−0.0014	0.0005
	(0.0020)	(0.0009)	(0.0030)	(0.0027)
Nonviolent campaign$_{t-1}$	0.0050	0.0349*	0.0713**	0.0438*
	(0.0124)	(0.0193)	(0.0303)	(0.0242)
Diffusion				
Year = 1970-1990	0.0024**	0.0026**	0.0019	0.0030*
	(0.0010)	(0.0013)	(0.0015)	(0.0016)
Year = 1991-2012	0.0038**	0.0027	0.0094***	0.0044***
	(0.0016)	(0.0019)	(0.0023)	(0.0015)
Number of nearby SD referendums	0.0001***	−0.0000	0.0002***	−0.0000
	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0001)
Temporal dependence				
Referendum years	−0.0000	−0.0007**	−0.0012**	−0.0001
	(0.0002)	(0.0003)	(0.0005)	(0.0002)
Referendum years^2	0.0000	0.0000*	0.0000*	−0.0000
	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)
Referendum years^3	−0.0000	−0.0000*	−0.0000*	0.0000
	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)
R^2	0.0077	0.0102	0.0396	0.0157
N	8608	8608	8608	8608

Note: All models estimated with OLS. Estimates for the constant not shown. Two-tailed heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors clustered at the SD dispute level in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

6.5.1 State Characteristics

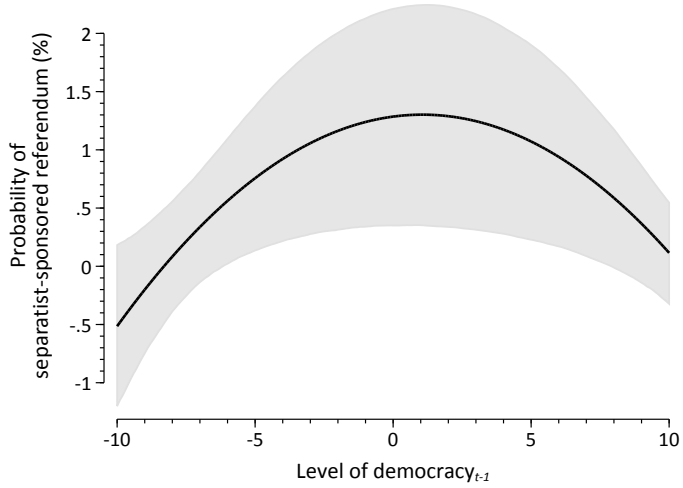
I find partial support for H6.1, referring to democracy. Consistent with H6.1a, I find that the probability of both ratification and arbitration referendums increases as states become more democratic ($p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.05$, respectively). Further, in line with H6.1b, I find evidence that separatist-sponsored referendums are most likely to occur in anocracies. As polynomials are difficult to interpret directly, Figure 6.1 plots the probability of an incident of a separatist-sponsored referendum in a dispute-year across the full range of possible values on the democracy scale. The plot was generated using CLARIFY (King, Tomz & Wittenberg 2000). It becomes evident that the relationship between democracy and separatist-sponsored referendums is bell-shaped as predicted by H6.1b, with separatist-sponsored referendums disproportionately occurring at medium levels of democracy. Finally, contrary to H6.1a, I do not find a significant relationship between democracy and state-sponsored referendums. The coefficient, while positive as suggested by H6.1a, clearly fails statistical significance ($p = 0.34$).

The evidence regarding the predictions derived from the reputation theory of conflict (H6.2) is weak. In line with H6.2b, I find that separatist-sponsored referendums are significantly more likely if the number of ethnic groups in a country is high ($p < 0.05$). But in all other models the number of ethnic groups does not behave as expected. On the one hand, the number of ethnic groups turns out to have no statistically significant effect on arbitration and state-sponsored referendum. On the other hand, the number of ethnic groups correlates positively with ratification referendums ($p < 0.05$), which directly contradicts H.5.4a.[27] These weak findings may reflect problems with measurement (the number of ethnic groups constitutes at best a weak proxy for the number of future challengers), but also with the underlying theory. While reputation-based arguments remain common in the literature on separatist conflict, this study is not the first to report evidence that is inconsistent with the predictions made by Walter and others (see e.g. Forsberg 2013, Sambanis, Germann & Schädel 2016). A possible reason is that the reputation theory of separatist conflict may only apply under a narrowly circumscribed set of conditions (Treisman 2004, Weisiger & Yarhi-Milo 2015).

Turning to constitutional provisions for referendums, I find support for H6.3, referring to

[27]The substantive conclusion remains the same if instead of Fearon's count of the number of ethnic groups the number of socially relevant groups as coded by AMAR (Birnir et al. 2015) or the number of politically relevant groups as coded by EPR (Vogt et al. 2015) are used, though it should be noted that EPR-based group counts may induce endogeneity, as discussed above.

Figure 6.1: Probability of separatist-sponsored SD referendums by democracy



legal provisions for mandatory referendums. In agreement with H6.2a, provisions for mandatory referendums lead to significant increases of both ratification and state-sponsored referendums ($p < 0.10$ and $p < 0.05$, respectively). By contrast, provisions for mandatory referendums do not significantly affect arbitration and separatist-sponsored referendums, as predicted by H6.2b.

By contrast, the evidence regarding provisions for citizen's initiatives (H6.4) is inconsistent. In agreement with H6.4b, provisions for citizen's initiatives decrease incidences of separatist-sponsored referendums ($p < 0.10$). I also find that provisions for citizen's initiatives are unrelated to state-sponsored referendums, in line with H6.2c. However, contrary to H6.2a I find that provisions for citizen's initiatives are unrelated to arbitration referendums. This is puzzling as arbitration referendums are the only type of SD referendum that can take the form of citizen's initiatives. A possible reason for this result may be that the measure includes citizen's initiative provisions irrespectively of whether citizen's initiatives related to self-rule are possible or not, or that the measure only counts provisions at the national level. Yet another reason may be that separatists rarely resort to citizen's initiatives because the ensuing referendums would include outgroup members. Finally, contrary to H6.3c, provisions for citizen's initiatives decrease the probability of ratification referendums ($p < 0.01$).

6.5.2 Group Characteristics

Turning to group characteristics, I find partial evidence for H6.5, referring to the demographic size of SD groups. Consistent with H6.5a, arbitration and separatist-sponsored referendums are more likely if ethnic groups are large ($p < 0.10$ and $p < 0.01$, respectively). However, the chal-

lenger's relative demographic size does not have significant effects on occurrences of ratification referendums (contrary to H6.5a) nor on incidences of state-sponsored referendums (contrary to H6.5b). The non-findings might reflect the fact that most SD groups are demographically small anyway. In the SDM-Eurasia sample, more than 60% of all SD challengers make up less than 2% of their host state's population, and more than 85% less than 10% (see chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion of the size of SD groups). Therefore, states may not be too concerned about the demographic size of SD groups.[28]

Contrary to H6.6, government inclusion does not have a statistically significant relationship with any of the two types of agreed and unilateral SD referendums. There are a number of potential reasons for these non-findings, both theoretical and measurement-related. First, included SD groups may not be more capable of extracting concessions related to self-rule than excluded SD groups because even included SD groups tend to be small and easily outvoted in cabinets. This could explain why included SD groups do not see more agreed SD referendums than excluded groups. Second, groups that are mobilized for SD may care more about regional self-rule than about representation at the center. Therefore, political inclusion may matter little for SD groups' level of grievance against the state, contrary to the argument that exclusion from central state institutions would increase separatist sentiment and motivate separatist groups to resort to unilateral referendums. Finally, the non-findings might be due to measurement problems. SD groups are considered included irrespectively of whether it is representatives of separatist movements that are represented in the national executive or representatives of other, non-separatist factions of the group. However, if it is the latter, the representatives are probably unlikely to lobby for self-rule in the cabinet. Further, separatist members of the ethnic group may not feel represented by their non-separatist brethren, which together could explain the non-findings.

Consistent with H6.7a, I find that SD groups that control a de facto independent state are more likely to launch their own, unilateral SD referendums ($p < 0.01$). Further, in line with H6.7b, the coefficient for de facto independence is negative in the model explaining incidences of state-sponsored referendums. The coefficient misses statistical significance, but this is due to a single case: the previously mentioned 2006 referendum instigated by the Georgian government against the will of South Ossetia's de facto authorities. All other state-sponsored referendums

[28]The results are even weaker if the untransformed group size is used instead of the log transformation.

were held in the absence of de facto independence. If this case is removed, the effect becomes statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. Finally, the results indicate that neither type of agreed SD referendum is affected by de facto independence, possibly suggesting that de facto independence's positive and negative effects on agreed referendums cancel each other out on the aggregate.

6.5.3 Dynamic Factors

Turning to dynamic factors, I find partial support for H6.8, referring to state repression. In line with H6.8a, separatist-sponsored referendums become more likely after government repression ($p < 0.05$). Against H6.8a, government repression does not significantly affect state-sponsored referendums, though it is noteworthy that the coefficient is positive, as predicted by theory. In agreement with H6.8b, arbitration referendums become less likely after government repression ($p < 0.01$), but against H6.8b government repression does not significantly affect ratification referendums. However, the latter result notably hinges on a single case: the 2003 autonomy referendum in Corsica.[29] Other than Corsica (2003), there is not a single ratification referendum following upon an act of state repression (measured in terms of restrictions of group rights) in the Eurasian sample. If this case is removed, the coefficient becomes negative and statistically significant ($p < 0.01$).

I find partial support for H6.9 about the type of self-rule claimed by SDMs. In line with H6.9b, both types of unilateral SD referendums are more likely to occur if SDMs make claims to outright secession (($p < 0.01$ and ($p < 0.05$, respectively). However, while H6.9a predicted that agreed SD referendums should be less likely if groups claim secession, I find that arbitration referendums are unrelated to the type of self-rule claim whereas ratification referendums are more rather than less likely if groups claim secession ($p < 0.05$). There are at least two potential reasons for this result. First, secessionist SDMs may on average be more mobilized and thus more able to inflict higher costs on states. Second, SDMs that make claims for secession may on average be more fragmented, as a minority of factions may continue to make claims for autonomy. Cunningham (2011) argues that states often make limited concessions to divided SDMs so as to flush out strategic secessionists and/or strengthen moderate forces. In line

[29] In 2002, France's constitutional court had limited Corsica's ability to derogate from national laws, thus nullifying a concession made in 2001.

with this logic, many of the ratification referendums that go to dominantly secessionist SDMs actually deal with autonomy rather than outright secession. The 1979 autonomy referendum in the Basque Country constitutes an example.

H6.10 and H6.11 predicted that all types of SD referendums should be more likely after separatist armed conflict and, even more so, after large-scale protest campaigns. In line with H6.11, the results indicate that nonviolent campaigns indeed increase the probabilities of all types of SD referendums (p ranging from < 0.05 to < 0.10) except for ratification referendums. However, contrary to H6.10, separatist armed conflict does not significantly affect incidences of SD referendums.[30] This is likely because large-scale nonviolent campaigns necessarily require broad-based public support, whereas insurgencies can also be fought with less substantial public backing. Thus, states may feel more threatened by nonviolent campaigns, which should increase chances for accommodative (such as a settlement involving a ratification referendum) or repressive (such as a state-sponsored referendum) responses to a higher extent. Furthermore, while separatists that can muster thousands of protesters are also likely to muster the support necessary to organize and win a unilateral referendum, the same does not necessarily apply to separatists that engage in insurgent tactics.

6.5.4 Diffusion

Turning to diffusion mechanisms, the data lends strong support to H6.12, relating to the diffusion of the SD referendum principle over time. With the exception of separatist-sponsored referendums, all types of SD referendums were significantly more likely to occur in the 1970–1990 period relative to 1945–1969 (p ranging from < 0.05 to < 0.10). Further, with the exception of arbitration referendums all types of referendums were more likely to occur in post-Cold War phase if compared to 1945–1969 (p ranging from < 0.01 to < 0.10).

Finally, I find partial support for the spatio-temporal diffusion mechanism suggested by H6.13. In line with H6.13, incidences of both ratification and separatist-sponsored SD referendums increase as the number of SD referendums in spatially connected countries increases ($p < 0.01$). This suggests that the increases of both types of SD referendums are partially driven by emulation or learning from experiences in nearby countries. Meanwhile, arbitration

[30]The results remain the same if only high-level separatist armed conflicts are counted and low-level armed conflicts excluded.

and state-sponsored referendums are unaffected by the number of referendums in connected countries.

Table 6.4 summarizes the findings with respect to the 13 hypotheses, with predictions that are borne out empirically (based on $p < 0.10$) highlighted in light gray.

6.5.5 Substantive Implications

Thus far the discussion of statistical results focused on the direction and statistical significance of estimated coefficients, while neglecting the size of estimated effects. To determine the substantive effects, I use CLARIFY to generate predicted probabilities while holding other covariates constant (King, Tomz & Wittenberg 2000). For binary factors I simulate the change in the predicted probability of a given type of SD referendum in a given year if the factor is absent (0) or present (1). For ordinal and continuous explanatory factors I simulate the difference between the tenth and the ninetieth percentile. A special case emerges for the effect of democracy on incidences of separatist-sponsored SD referendums. Due to the curvilinear nature of this relationship, changes from low to high democracy are not a meaningful quantity of interest. Instead, I simulate the implications when moving from full autocracy (-10 on the democracy scale) to medium anocracy (0) as well as the implications when moving from medium anocracy (0) to full democracy (10).

Figure 6.2 shows the results. The amounts to which explanatory variables are changed are given in brackets (low $\rightarrow$ high). The bars give the point estimates while the spikes give the 95% confidence intervals. To improve readability, the upper bounds are abridged and instead given in square brackets in a few cases. Only effects that cross the 10% level of statistical significance are shown.

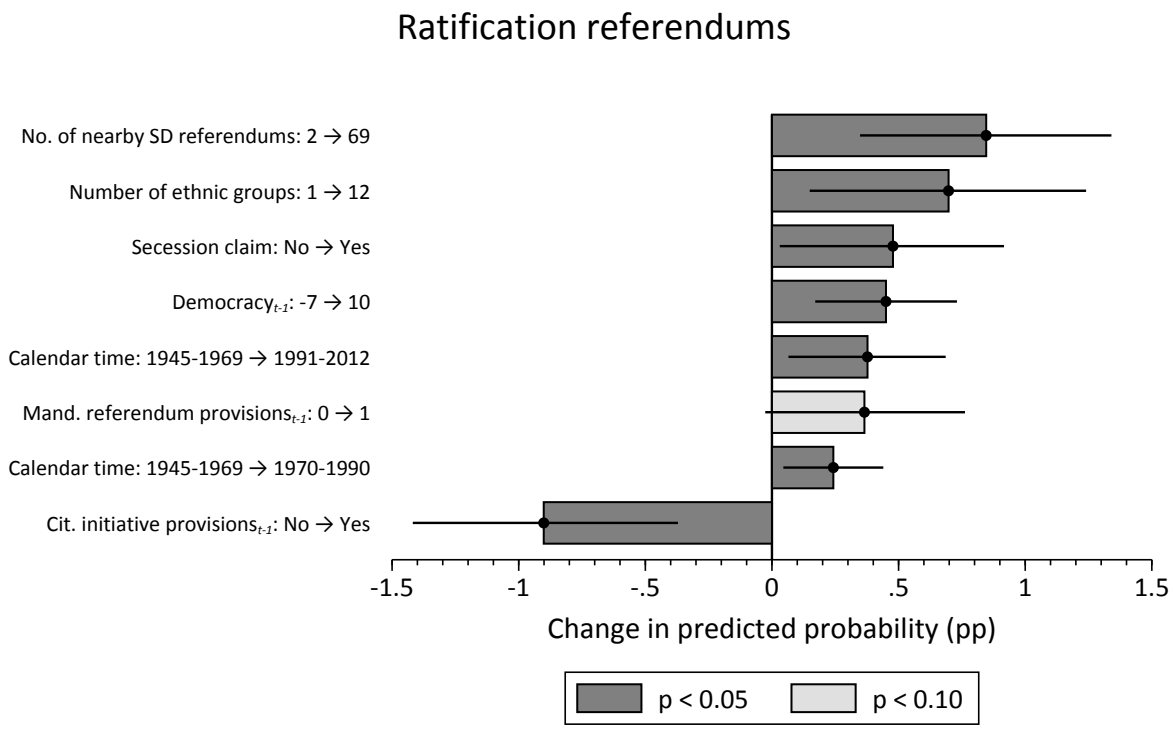
Figure 6.2a suggests that the number of SD referendums in nearby countries has a large effect on ratification referendums, with the probability of a ratification referendum increasing by 0.9 percentage point in contexts where there have been many (69) as compared to few (2) SD referendums in surrounding countries. Both the number of ethnic groups and provisions for citizen's initiatives have similarly sized effects, though as noted above the direction of the effects goes against theoretical expectations. Smaller effects are found for the remaining covariates. The probability of a ratification referendum increases by 0.5 percentage points if movements demand

Table 6.4: Summary of findings

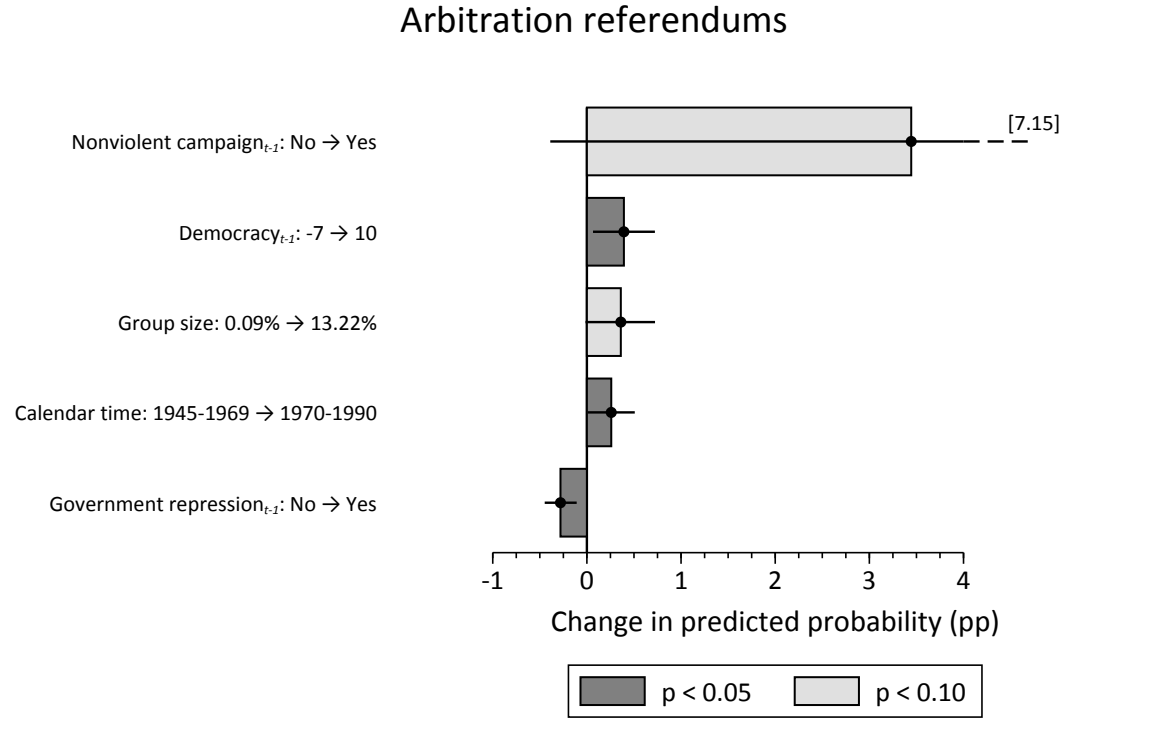
		Ratification referendums		Arbitration referendums		Separatist-sponsored referendums		State-sponsored referendums	
Concept	**Hypothesis**	**Exp.**	**Found**	**Exp.**	**Found**	**Exp.**	**Found**	**Exp.**	**Found**
State characteristics									
Democracy	H6.1	+	+	+	+	inv. U	inv. U	+	None
Number of future challengers	H6.2	-	+	-	None	+	+	+	None
Provisions for mandatory referendums	H6.3	+	+	None	None	None	None	+	+
Provisions for citizen's initiatives	H6.4	None	-	+	None	-	-	None	None
Group characteristics									
Group size	H6.5	+	None	+	+	+	+	-	None
Government inclusion	H6.6	+	None	+	None	-	None	-	None
De facto independence	H6.7		None		None	+	+	-	-[a]
Dynamics of separatist conflict									
Government repression	H6.8	-	-[b]	-	-	+	+	+	None
Secession claim	H6.9	-	+	-	None	+	+	+	+
Separtist armed conflict	H6.10	+	None	+	None	+	None	+	None
Nonviolent campaign	H6.11	+	None	+	+	+	+	+	+
Diffusion									
Calendar time	H6.12	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Number of nearby SD referendums	H6.13	+	+	+	None	+	+	+	None

Note: Findings are classified based on $p < 0.10$. Confirmed predictions are highlighted in light gray. Exp. means expected; inv. means inverted.
[a] After removing South Ossetia (2006) (see text).
[b] After removing Corsica (2003) (see text).

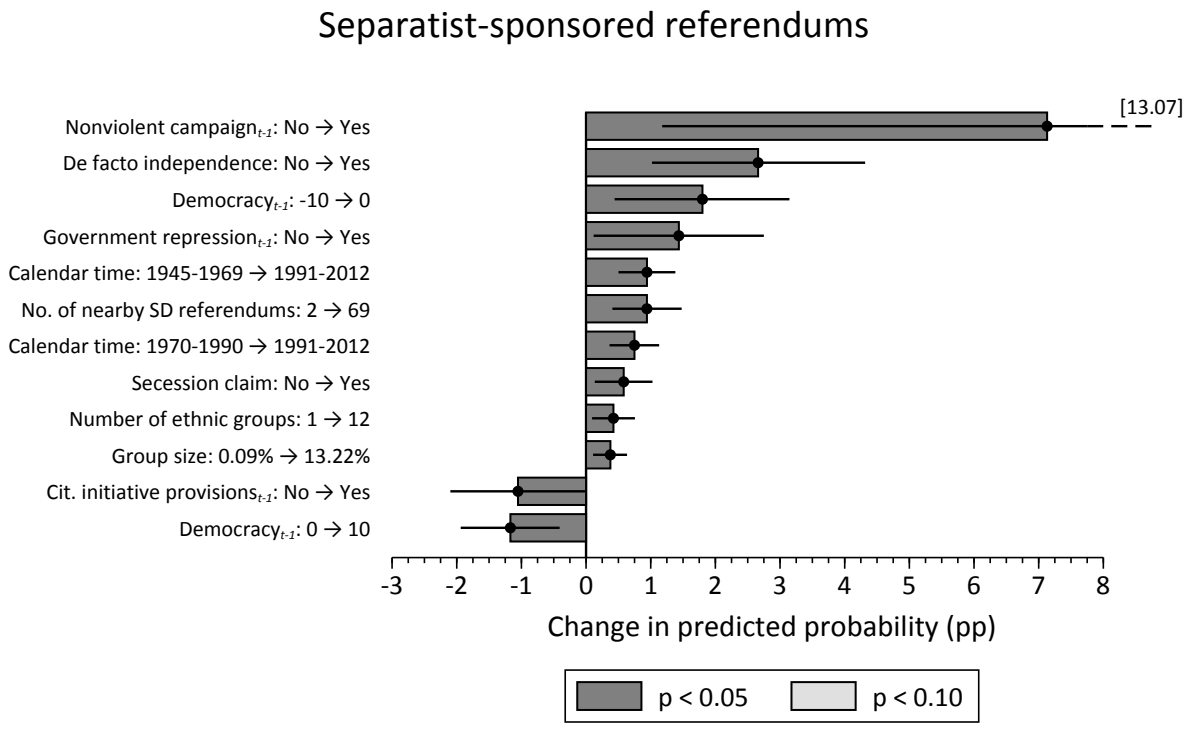
Figure 6.2: Substantive effects



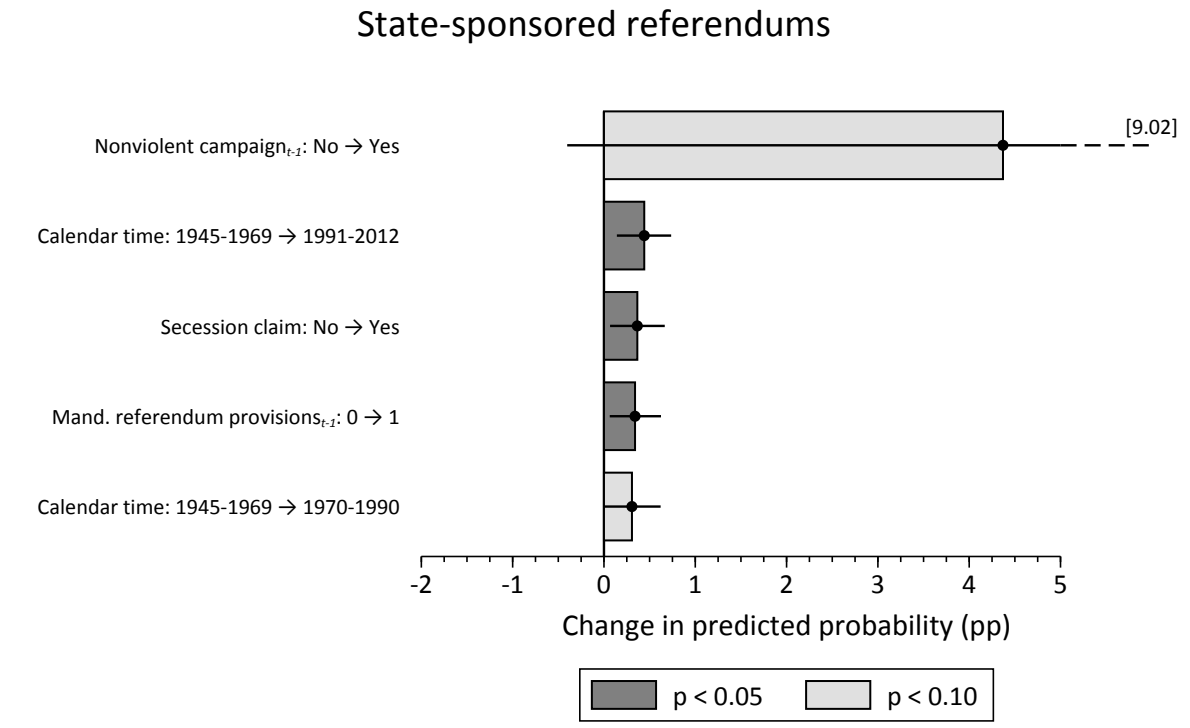
(a)



(b)


Separatist-sponsored referendums
Nonviolent campaign$_{t-1}$: No → Yes
De facto independence: No → Yes
Democracy$_{t-1}$: -10 → 0
Government repression$_{t-1}$: No → Yes
Calendar time: 1945-1969 → 1991-2012
No. of nearby SD referendums: 2 → 69
Calendar time: 1970-1990 → 1991-2012
Secession claim: No → Yes
Number of ethnic groups: 1 → 12
Group size: 0.09% → 13.22%
Cit. initiative provisions$_{t-1}$: No → Yes
Democracy$_{t-1}$: 0 → 10
[13.07]
-3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Change in predicted probability (pp)
p < 0.05
p < 0.10

(c)


State-sponsored referendums
Nonviolent campaign$_{t-1}$: No → Yes
Calendar time: 1945-1969 → 1991-2012
Secession claim: No → Yes
Mand. referendum provisions$_{t-1}$: 0 → 1
Calendar time: 1945-1969 → 1970-1990
[9.02]
-2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5
Change in predicted probability (pp)
p < 0.05
p < 0.10

(d)

secession rather than autonomy.[31] The probability of a ratification referendum also increases by about 0.5 percentage points when moving from an autocracy with -7 on the democracy scale to full democracies with a value of 10 on the democracy scale. Compared to 1945–1969, ratification referendums are 0.25 percentage points more likely in 1970–1991 and 0.4 percentage points more likely in the post-Cold War period.[32] Finally, provisions for mandatory referendums increase the probability of ratification referendums by 0.4 percentage points.

For arbitration referendums (Figure 6.2b), nonviolent campaigns have by far the largest effect, increasing their probability by more than 3 percentage points. All other factors have significantly smaller effects. The probability of an arbitration referendum turns out to be about 0.4 percentage points higher in full democracies (+10 on the democracy scale) than in autocracies (-7). It also turns out to be about 0.4 percentage points higher for large groups that make up about 13% of a country's population compared to very small groups making up only a tenth of a percent of a country's population. Finally, government repression decreases the probability of an arbitration by 0.3 percentage points, whereas they are 0.25 percentage points more likely in 1970–1990 if compared to 1945–1969.

Figure 6.2c suggests that analogously to arbitration referendums, nonviolent campaigns have the largest effect on separatist-sponsored referendums (a 7 percentage point increase). De facto independence has the second largest effect, increasing the probability of separatist-sponsored SD referendums by 2.6 percentage points. Further, democracy also has a large effect: separatist-sponsored referendums turn out to be almost 2 percentage points more likely to occur in anocracies (0 on the democracy scale) compared to full autocracies (-10) and about 1.2 percentage points more likely in anocracies (0) than in full democracies (10). Substantively important effects also emerge for government repression (plus 1.4 percentage points) and citizen's initiative provisions (minus 1.1 percentage points). Separatist-sponsored referendums turn out to be a little less than 1 percentage point more likely in the post-Cold War period and also about 1 percentage point more likely if the number of previous SD referendums in nearby countries is high. Substantively smaller effects ranging from plus 0.4 to plus 0.6 percentage points are found for the type of self-rule claim, the number of ethnic groups, and the relative demographic

[31] Note that the theory had predicted a negative effect for claims to secession. Possible reasons for this contrary result are that secessionist groups are more mobilized and/or are more fragmented (see above).

[32] However, the difference between 1970–1990 and 1991–2012 is not statistically significant.

size of the SD group.

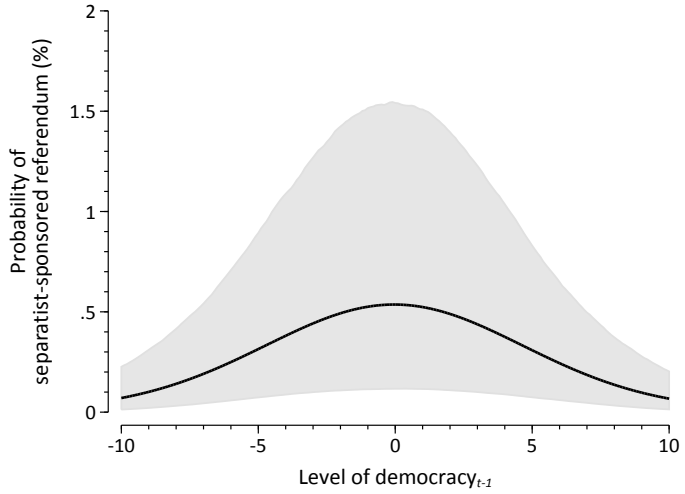
Turning to state-sponsored referendums, nonviolent campaigns are once more the most important predictor, with the probability of a state-sponsored referendum increasing by almost 4.5 percentage points after a nonviolent campaign. The remaining four factors that yielded statistically significant results (calendar time, claim to secession, and mandatory referendum provisions) all lead to similar increases in the probability of state-sponsored referendums in the realm of 0.3 to 0.4 percentage points.

6.6 Robustness Checks

I now turn to a series of robustness tests to evaluate the sensitivity of the findings reported above. Readers who are not interested in technical details may want to skip this section and move directly to the conclusion.

First, I reestimate all models with logit regression (see Table 6.5). As argued in the data and methods section, logit regression yields invalid estimates for a number of regressors due to quasicomplete separation. However, for variables that are not affected by separation, logit tends to yield more accurate parameter estimates. Reassuringly, barring the regressors suffering from quasicomplete separation (denoted in italics), the logit estimates turn out to be similar to the OLS estimates reported above (see also Figure 6.3, which shows that the effect of democracy on separatist-sponsored referendums continues to be bell-shaped). Only three substantive differences emerge. First, the effect of the secession claim variable falls marginally below the 10% level in the ratification referendum model ($p = 0.13$). Second, the positive effect of government repression on state-sponsored referendums is now significant ($p < 0.05$), thus affirming the role of government repression in the genesis of SD referendums (H6.8). Finally, while OLS suggested no significant relationship, logit suggests that arbitration referendums become significantly more likely if there are provisions for mandatory referendums ($p < 0.01$). This is puzzling as mandatory referendum provisions cannot trigger arbitration referendums. As argued above, mandatory referendums only emerge once a legislative change has been adopted, which is by definition not the case for arbitration referendums. A possible explanation may be that mandatory referendum provisions indirectly affect arbitration referendums by increasing the acceptance of the referendum device as a means of conflict resolution, but it is difficult to read too much into this finding.

Figure 6.3: Probability of separatist-sponsored SD referendums by democracy (logit)



Next, I check to what extent the results depend on the two SD referendums that have been assigned to multiple SD disputes. Both multiply assigned referendums represent state-sponsored referendums. The first is Gorbachev's 1991 all-union referendum. This referendum was assigned to a total of 6 SD disputes, including the disputes between the Soviet Union and the Estonians, the Latvians, and the Georgians. The second is the 1992 referendum in Russia's Karachay-Cherkessia republic, which was aimed at the preservation of the unified republic. This referendum was assigned to the SD disputes involving the Karachays and the Cherkess. Model 1 in Table 6.6 shows the results if the state-sponsored referendum model is re-estimated without these cases.[33] Several effect estimates change as a result of this. The previously significant effects of mandatory referendum provisions, claims to secession, and nonviolent campaigns are no longer significant. At the same time, democracy now has a weakly significant positive effect, in agreement with H6.1a.[34] That conclusions change is probably not surprising, given the low number of state-sponsored referendums and that more than a third of dispute-years assigned with a state-sponsored referendum are dropped. Nevertheless, this exercise suggests that several of the inferences regarding state-sponsored referendums depend on the two cases that affected multiple SD disputes.

In a third and final step, I consider a number of additional factors that may explain SD

[33] 7 and not 8 observations are dropped because one of the 8 dispute-years (Soviet Union-Estonians-1991) had a second state-sponsored referendum.

[34] Furthermore, citizen's initiative provisions now have a weakly significant positive effect, which is odd because state-sponsored referendums are by definition initiated by the state.

Table 6.5: Logit estimates

	(1) Ratification referendums	(2) Arbitration referendums	(3) Separatist-sponsored referendums	(4) State-sponsored referendums
State characteristics				
Democracy$_{t-1}$	0.244***	0.147***	−0.001	0.070
	(0.050)	(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.050)
Democracy$_{t-1}{}^2$			−0.021***	
			(0.006)	
Number of ethnic groups	0.359***	0.075	0.192***	0.170
	(0.096)	(0.079)	(0.049)	(0.128)
Mandatory referendum provisions$_{t-1}$	1.447***	1.308***	0.356	2.064***
	(0.509)	(0.507)	(0.399)	(0.568)
Citizen's initiative provisions$_{t-1}$	−2.857***	−0.088	−0.754*	0.428
	(0.851)	(0.657)	(0.415)	(0.837)
Group characteristics				
ln(group size)	0.022	0.269**	0.374***	0.081
	(0.203)	(0.116)	(0.104)	(0.144)
Government inclusion	0.181	−0.554	0.593	−1.538
	(0.580)	(0.627)	(0.448)	(1.052)
De facto independence	1.554	0.630	1.451***	−0.606
	(1.452)	(0.989)	(0.447)	(1.026)
Dynamic factors				
Government repression$_{t-1}$	0.250	*−13.494***	1.159***	1.397**
	(1.123)	*(0.508)*	(0.426)	(0.616)
Secession claim	0.866	−0.029	1.021**	1.788***
	(0.568)	(0.690)	(0.451)	(0.675)
Separatist armed conflict$_{t-1}$	0.913	−0.899	−0.051	0.772
	(0.683)	(0.704)	(0.472)	(0.839)
Nonviolent campaign$_{t-1}$	0.323	3.834***	1.720***	2.745**
	(1.371)	(0.643)	(0.472)	(1.078)
Diffusion				
Year = 1970-1990	*14.384****	1.194**	0.509	*14.305****
	(1.192)	(0.476)	(1.137)	*(1.241)*
Year = 1991-2012	*14.065****	1.685***	2.195**	*14.806****
	(0.940)	(0.450)	(0.995)	*(0.972)*
Number of nearby SD referendums	0.040***	−0.014	0.021**	−0.007
	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.016)
Temporal dependence				
Referendum years	−0.029	−0.380**	−0.132	−0.113
	(0.058)	(0.156)	(0.089)	(0.217)
Referendum years^2	0.001	0.016**	0.005	0.004
	(0.002)	(0.008)	(0.004)	(0.014)
Referendum years^3	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Pseudo R^2	0.185	0.206	0.346	0.282
N	8608	8608	8608	8608

Note: Estimates in italics suffer from quasicomplete separation. Estimates for the constant not shown. Two-tailed standard errors clustered at the SD dispute level in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 6.6: Further robustness checks

	(1) State-sponsored referendums	(2) Ratification referendums	(3) Arbitration referendums	(4) Separatist-sponsored referendums	(5) State-sponsored referendums
State characteristics					
Democracy$_{t-1}$	0.0001*	0.0003***	0.0002**	0.0002	−0.0000
	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0002)	(0.0001)
Democracy$_{t-1}^2$				−0.0001***	
				(0.0001)	
Number of ethnic groups	−0.0002	0.0006**	0.0003	0.0005*	0.0002
	(0.0002)	(0.0003)	(0.0003)	(0.0003)	(0.0002)
Mandatory referendum provisions$_{t-1}$	0.0012	0.0030	0.0052**	0.0023	0.0033**
	(0.0012)	(0.0023)	(0.0025)	(0.0018)	(0.0016)
Citizen's initiative provisions$_{t-1}$	0.0059*	−0.0096***	0.0006	−0.0106*	0.0004
	(0.0033)	(0.0030)	(0.0030)	(0.0055)	(0.0043)
Group characteristics					
ln(group size)	0.0001	0.0003	0.0004	0.0014**	0.0003
	(0.0002)	(0.0005)	(0.0004)	(0.0006)	(0.0003)
Government inclusion	−0.0002	0.0007	−0.0014	−0.0002	−0.0027*
	(0.0010)	(0.0026)	(0.0016)	(0.0025)	(0.0015)
De facto independence	−0.0006	−0.0001	0.0019	0.0266***	−0.0025
	(0.0030)	(0.0037)	(0.0028)	(0.0088)	(0.0029)
Dynamic factors					
Government repression$_{t-1}$	0.0047	0.0010	−0.0027***	0.0133**	0.0057
	(0.0041)	(0.0025)	(0.0009)	(0.0067)	(0.0047)
Secession claim	0.0015	0.0046**	0.0000	0.0061***	0.0038**
	(0.0011)	(0.0021)	(0.0012)	(0.0022)	(0.0015)
Separatist armed conflict$_{t-1}$	0.0013	0.0016	−0.0010	−0.0010	0.0008
	(0.0024)	(0.0020)	(0.0009)	(0.0031)	(0.0027)
Nonviolent campaign$_{t-1}$	0.0236	0.0055	0.0346*	0.0703**	0.0431*
	(0.0178)	(0.0124)	(0.0191)	(0.0299)	(0.0240)
Diffusion					
Year = 1970-1990	0.0031**	0.0017*	0.0034**	0.0031**	0.0038**
	(0.0015)	(0.0009)	(0.0014)	(0.0015)	(0.0017)
Year = 1991-2012	0.0018**	0.0034*	0.0037**	0.0114***	0.0062***
	(0.0009)	(0.0018)	(0.0018)	(0.0026)	(0.0021)
Number of nearby SD referendums	−0.0001	0.0001**	−0.0000	0.0002***	−0.0000
	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Temporal dependence					
Referendum years	−0.0001	−0.0000	−0.0007**	−0.0012**	−0.0001
	(0.0001)	(0.0002)	(0.0003)	(0.0005)	(0.0002)
Referendum years^2	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000**	0.0000*	−0.0000
	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)
Referendum years^3	0.0000	−0.0000	−0.0000*	−0.0000*	0.0000
	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)
Additional covariates					
Federal state$_{t-1}$		−0.0005	−0.0005	0.0035	0.0005
		(0.0024)	(0.0012)	(0.0022)	(0.0014)
Gov.-ini. referendum provisions$_{t-1}$		0.0051**	−0.0040**	−0.0051**	−0.0017
		(0.0021)	(0.0016)	(0.0021)	(0.0015)
Precedent		0.0042***	−0.0020	−0.0028	0.0020
		(0.0015)	(0.0021)	(0.0030)	(0.0017)
Spatial concentration		0.0015	0.0016*	0.0039*	0.0028**
		(0.0016)	(0.0009)	(0.0022)	(0.0014)
Ethnic kin		0.0007	0.0020*	−0.0007	0.0001
		(0.0015)	(0.0012)	(0.0019)	(0.0013)
Regional autonomy		−0.0023	−0.0012	0.0011	0.0003
		(0.0015)	(0.0015)	(0.0017)	(0.0010)
Hydrocarbon reserves		0.0012	0.0007	−0.0010	−0.0016
		(0.0014)	(0.0010)	(0.0016)	(0.0013)
R^2	0.010	0.010	0.012	0.041	0.017
N	8601	8608	8608	8608	8608

Note: All models estimated with OLS. Estimates for the constant not shown. Two-tailed heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors clustered at the SD dispute level in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

referendums. This allows me to assess the robustness of the central findings reported above while checking whether important factors have been missed. Models 2–5 in Table 6.6 report the results. A total of seven covariates are added. First, I include a dummy indicating federal states (Roeder 2009). Federal states may be more willing to make concessions to SD challengers, for example by creating a new subdivision (such as the Jura canton in Switzerland) (Cunningham 2014). In theory, this may translate into more agreed SD referendums in federal states, and possibly also fewer unilateral referendums. However, the federal state dummy turns out unrelated to all four types of SD referendums.

Second, I add a dummy indicating whether a country has legal provisions that allow the central government to call referendums at its own discretion (Coppedge et al. 2015, Altman 2015). Central governments do not need constitutional sanction to call referendums (Suksi 1993),[35] but it may nevertheless be the case that central governments that are constitutionally enabled to call referendums more frequently call SD referendums. In practice, the effect turns out to be highly inconsistent. Ratification referendums indeed turn out to be more likely if there are provisions for government-initiated referendums ($p < 0.05$). But state-sponsored referendums are unaffected and arbitration referendums even turn out to be less likely if there are such provisions ($p < 0.05$). Further, while there are no theoretical reasons to expect that separatist-sponsored referendums are affected by provisions that allow governments to initiate referendums, the model yields a significant-negative correlation ($p < 0.05$). Given these inconsistent results, it appears unlikely that provisions for government-initiated referendums matter for SD referendums.

Third, I add a dummy noting whether or not there was an SD referendum in the past in the same country. Precedents may increase the attractiveness of SD referendums or even make them obligatory in a political sense (Morel 2007). In line with this argument, ratification referendums are more likely in countries with precedents ($p < 0.01$). However, all other types of referendums are not affected.

Fourth, I add a dummy capturing whether the SD group has a high level of spatial concentration and, fifth, I add a dummy denoting whether it has ethnic kin in another country. Both measures are derived from the SDM-Eurasia dataset. High levels of spatial concentration and external kin increase SD groups' mobilizational capacity (Cederman, Gleditsch, Salehyan &

[35]The government of the United Kingdom, for example, repeatedly called SD referendums on a purely ad hoc basis. Scotland's 1997 autonomy referendum constitutes a case in point.

Wucherpfennig 2013, Jenne 2007, Toft 2003, Weidmann 2009) and may therefore have similar effects to group size. Models 3–5 suggest that group concentration is indeed a significant predictor of arbitration referendums, separatist-sponsored referendums, and state-sponsored referendums (p ranging from < 0.05 to < 0.10) whereas ratification referendums are unaffected.[36] Ethnic kin, on the other hand, has a weakly significant effect only on arbitration referendums.

Sixth, I add a dummy denoting whether an SD group has a meaningful level of regional autonomy. The data is again from SDM-Eurasia. Regional autonomy may affect SD referendum incidences, though it is not clear how. States may, for example, be more willing to make concessions to already autonomous groups because further devolution is easier to manage, thus increasing chances of agreed SD referendums but decreasing chances of unilateral SD referendums. However, states that have already given a group autonomy may have reached their saturation point, thus decreasing chances for further concessions and, by implication, decreasing chances for agreed referendums but increasing chances for unilateral referendums.[37] Empirically, I find no significant relationship, which might be because the different mechanisms cancel each other out.

Finally, I include a dummy denoting whether the territory that is claimed by an SDM includes hydrocarbon reserves (oil or gas). The measure is culled from the SDM-Eurasia dataset. Hydrocarbons may, for example, increase occurrences of separatist-sponsored referendums because they can increase SD groups' mobilizational capacity, create grievances related to resource extraction, or create a financial incentive for separatism (Ross 2004). The presence of hydrocarbons may also affect governments' willingness to make concessions to SDMs. Rent-seeking states may want to retain maximum control over territory with hydrocarbons (Walter 2006*a*), and so may be less likely to agree to an SD referendum and/or more likely to unilaterally press

[36]The finding regarding state-sponsored referendums is puzzling as theoretical arguments would make us expect a negative and not a positive effect. First, as concentrated groups are more easily mobilized, group concentration should be expected to have a deterrent effect, thus decreasing the incidence of state-sponsored referendums. Second, a lack of spatial concentration should provide incentives for the state to unilaterally invoke a referendum. Groups that lack majority status in their homeland are easily outvoted. The unilaterally invoked 1973 Border Poll in Northern Ireland constitutes a good example; the separatist Northern Irish Catholics were outnumbered by the generally unionist Northern Irish Protestants, rendering the outcome of the referendum a safe bet.

[37]In addition, regional autonomy may negatively affect incidences of separatist-sponsored referendums because it lowers grievances against the state (Brancati 2006, Cederman et al. 2015), but also positively affect separatist-sponsored referendums because regional autonomy may make it easier for SDMs to organize a referendum independently of the central government. More generally, regional autonomy increases SD groups' mobilizational capacity (Bunce 1999, Cornell 2002), which may make it easier for SDMs to launch a unilateral referendum on self-rule, but also to extract concessions from the state in the form of agreed SD referendums.

a referendum with the aim of avoiding concessions. However, contrary to these arguments, hydrocarbon reserves turn out unrelated to all four types of SD referendums.

In sum, then, the experimentation with additional variables suggests that none of the added variables constitutes a glaring omission, with the partial exception of group concentration. Meanwhile the results for the other covariates remain similar. There are a few notable exceptions. While the main models reported above suggested weakly significant relationships between mandatory referendum provisions and ratification referendums as well as group size and arbitration referendums, these two effects are now no longer significant. At the same time, in agreement with H6.6b, government inclusion now has a weakly significant negative effect on state-sponsored referendums, raising the possibility that government inclusion is not fully irrelevant for SD referendums. Finally, as in the logit model mandatory referendum provisions now significantly increase incidences of arbitration referendums ($p < 0.05$). For the reasons stated above, this finding is difficult to make sense of substantively.

6.7 Summary and Discussion

What factors make SD referendums likely or unlikely to occur? The analysis presented in this chapter yielded several new answers. In departure to previous work, I developed a new model suggesting that agreed and unilateral SD referendums, and to a lesser extent their subtypes, are due to different dynamics. More than a dozen factors were identified that were hypothesized to affect these different types of SD referendums sometimes in uniform, but more often in differential ways. The resultant expectations were tested on the basis of new data on all noncolonial SD disputes in European and Asian countries, 1945–2012.

The results suggest that agreed and unilateral SD referendums, and to a lesser extent their sub-types, are indeed products of different theoretical processes. My theory suggests that agreed SD referendums should occur under conditions that facilitate compromise solutions whereas unilateral SD referendums should occur under conditions that prevent compromises. In line with this, I found that democratic states, with their culture of compromise, have a higher propensity to agree to SD referendums, whereas separatist-sponsored referendums are more likely in semidemocratic regimes that more often resort to repressive policies. Further, the evidence suggests that separatist-sponsored SD referendums often occur in response to government repression, whereas agreed SD referendums rarely occur in repressive contexts. Finally, I found

that unilateral SD referendums, including both those initiated by states and by the separatists, tend to occur more often if SDMs make radical claims outright secession, probably at least in part as this decreases scope for compromise.

In addition to conditions that facilitate or prevent compromise, my framework suggests that occurrences of SD referendums should be driven by factors that affect their feasibility, attractiveness, or even necessity. Several of the findings indeed point in this direction, while again important differences emerged between the different types of SD referendums. For example, whereas legal provisions requiring referendums before constitutional changes tended to be unrelated to separatist-sponsored and arbitration referendums, settlements between states and SDMs turned out to be more frequently subjected to ratification referendums in the presence of provisions for mandatory referendums, and were state-sponsored referendums (though these effects are not robust across all specifications). Moreover, I found that groups that control their own de facto independent statelet are much more likely to unilaterally call referendums on self-rule, probably due to a combination of the high capabilities of such groups to organize referendums without state interference, generally high levels of local support for independence, and strong incentives to demonstrate this to the outside world. At the same time, de facto independence appears to reduce occurrences of the other type of unilateral SD referendums—those initiated by states—-probably because states lack access to the separatist territory.

The fact that many of the variables affect the different types of SD referendums in different ways underlines the analytical value of the distinction between agreed and unilateral SD referendums (and their sub-types). That said, a number of other variables also have more uniform effects. For example, I found evidence that all types of SD referendums turned out to be significantly more likely to occur in recent years, suggesting a temporal diffusion effect due to the emergence of a new international norm and the increased promotion of SD referendums by the international community. Further, at least two types of SD referendums (ratification and separatist-sponsored referendums) turned out to be positively affected by the number of SD referendums previously held in nearby countries, suggesting a demonstration effect. However, uniform effects may notably emerge for non-uniform reasons. For example, protest may trigger both accommodative and repressive answers by the state, and I accordingly found that protest large-scale nonviolent protest campaigns substantially increase incidences of both (arbitration-type) agreed SD referendums and unilateral SD referendums.

Finally, some of the the factors theorized to matter for SD referendum occurrences turned

out not to have the expected effects. This includes past separatist armed conflict, the number of ethnic groups, government inclusion, and provisions for citizen's initiatives. Several reasons may account for this. First, the non-findings may be due to modeling deficiencies. The nature of the empirical analysis presented in this chapter is explicitly correlational. The non-findings may thus reflect hidden bias due to an omitted confounder. (The same also applies to the findings that align with theoretical expectations.) Second, the lack of empirical support may be due to measurement problems. The number of ethnic groups constitutes at best a rough proxy for the number of future challengers, for example, whereas the present measure for provisions for citizen's initiatives counts also cases where citizen's initiatives are only permitted for issues other than SD. Further, the measure exclusively considers the country level while in some cases the regional level may be more relevant. Finally, in some cases, the lack of empirical support may indicate problems with the underlying argument, suggesting the need for theoretical revisions. For example, the reputation theory of separatist conflict as stated by Walter (2006*a*) and others may be too simplistic and apply only under a narrowly circumscribed set of conditions.

Chapter 7

Self-Determination Referendums and Separatist Armed Conflict

7.1 Introduction

After investigating the determinants of SD referendums, we are now in a good position to evaluate the link between SD referendums and separatist armed conflict. The chapter is structured as follows. First, I recap the theoretical argument made in chapter 3 and derive testable hypotheses regarding the effects of agreed and unilateral SD referendums on separatist armed conflict (section two). Next, I discuss the data and methods (section three). The fourth section presents the main results. Section five presents the results of an extensive sensitivity analysis. Finally, section six sums up the results of the empirical investigation.

7.2 Recapitulation and Hypotheses

Chapter 3 argued that SD referendums can act as catalysts for both peace and separatist armed conflict, depending on the circumstances under which they are invoked. Two broad scenarios for SD referendums were distinguished. On the one hand, SD referendums that are initiated with the mutual agreement of both states and self-determination movements (SDMs). Aimed either at the ratification of a self-rule settlement or at arbitration between states and SDMs, agreed SD referendums were argued to increase chances for peace both in the short and the long run as they create perceptions of fair decision-making; because they may contribute to a reversal of hostile images; due to the emergence of referendum-related coalitions; as they may

push forward a peace process that would otherwise be blocked; and because they may increase the durability of settlements and alleviate commitment problems.

SD referendums that are initiated unilaterally by states or SDMs constituted the second scenario. Unilateral SD referendums generally represent self-serving exercises by which their initiators want to further their own agenda, and they may increase rather than decrease chances for separatist armed conflict by increasing grievances; by generating reputation costs; and by reducing the scope for negotiated settlements. Crucially, the consequences of unilateral SD referendums for separatist armed conflict should play out primarily in the short term when referendum-induced grievances, reputation concerns, and bargaining constraints are freshly felt.

In sum, this reasoning can be condensed in the form of the following two testable hypotheses:

> **H7.1:** Agreed SD referendums decrease the probability of separatist armed conflict, and they do so both in the immediate aftermath of the referendums and in the longer term.
>
> **H7.2:** Unilateral SD referendums increase the probability of separatist armed conflict, and they do so especially in the immediate aftermath of the referendums.

The remainder of this chapter tests these hypotheses empirically. Next, I discuss the data and methods used for hypothesis testing.

7.3 Data and Methods

The goal of this chapter is to establish the causal effect of agreed and unilateral SD referendums on separatist armed conflict. As stated repeatedly, the main challenge hereby is that incidences of agreed and unilateral SD referendums are endogenous to the risk of separatist armed conflict. That is, agreed SD referendums generally occur in situations where peace is likely *even in the absence of the referendum* whereas unilaterally initiated SD referendums tend to occur in situations with a substantial risk for violence *even in the absence of the referendum*. This poses clear dangers for causal identification. For example, without adequate accounting for the endogenous nature of unilateral SD referendums, we may wrongly conclude that unilateral SD referendums increase the probability of violent conflict by a given amount when in fact the observed relationship is partially or even fully driven by the fact that these referendums simply tend to occur in conflict-prone situations.

As stated in the introduction, the ideal solutions for causal identification problems due to

the endogeneity are randomized experiments or natural experiments with as-if randomization. Unfortunately, however, neither is feasible in the present context. SD referendums cannot be randomized, and situations tantamount to as if-randomization are unlikely to exist for SD referendums. Due to this, the empirical strategy pursued here is to estimate the effects of agreed and unilateral SD referendums on separatist armed conflict using multiple regression while accounting for possible confounders.

As is well established, causal identification in regression models is tricky. Regression estimates of causal effects are unbiased only if treatment and control groups are comparable conditional on observed covariates (King, Keohane & Verba 1994). This is often referred to as the selection on observables assumption.[1] The implication is that all confounders must be observed—all factors that simultaneously explain the treatment (or stimulus) and the outcome of interest. In our case, these are factors that simultaneously explain agreed or unilateral SD referendums and separatist armed conflict.

To identify relevant confounders, I will combine the insights on the determinants of SD referendums from the last chapter with extant arguments on factors that drive separatist armed conflict and civil war more generally (see below). Selection on observables remains a strong assumption, even when detailed consideration is given to the selection of covariates (as here). The possibility that one or more relevant confounders have been overlooked cannot be excluded. Some potential confounders are known but cannot be accounted for due to measurement problems, such as public support for SD (see chapter 6). Further relevant confounders may exist but are currently unknown. To strengthen the plausibility of the causal estimates, I complement the main results with an extensive set of robustness checks where I, among other things, add a range of further potential confounders to the specification, re-estimate all models with fixed effects, and conduct a formal sensitivity analysis to probe the plausibility of the selection on observables assumption.

As in the previous chapter, the empirical analysis draws on the disaggregated data on non-colonial SD disputes provided by the SDM-Eurasia dataset (Sambanis, Germann & Schädel 2016, Germann, Sambanis & Schädel 2016). Accordingly, the unit of analysis is again the dispute-year, defined as an SDM-state dyad in a given calendar year (for example, Scots-United

[1]The selection on observables assumption is also referred to as the conditional independence, ignorability, or the no omitted variable assumption.

Kingdom-2012). The SDM-Eurasia dataset offers several important advantages for the present analytical purposes. First, delimiting the sample to active SD disputes facilitates causal inference. SD referendums almost by definition occur in the context of an active SD dispute. Cases without an active SD dispute would not therefore constitute good counterfactuals. Second, SDM-Eurasia avoids the oversampling of violent SD disputes as well as disputes in wealthier and more democratic states that tends to afflict existing datasets on SD disputes, thus removing a potential source of bias (see chapter 5). Finally, the SDM-Eurasia dataset includes measures for several important covariates that are not available in other similar datasets, such as Minorities at Risk (MAR). Examples include de facto independence and state-movement interactions in the form of self-rule concessions and restrictions (see below).

However, it is also important to recognize the limitations that come with the SDM-Eurasia dataset. Most importantly, while the SDM-Eurasia dataset identifies noncolonial SD disputes globally, including periods of separatist armed conflict, several more detailed measures that will be used as controls are only available for SD disputes in European and Asian countries.[2] Thus, barring naive bivariate assessments, we can only learn about the effects of agreed and unilateral SD referendums on separatist armed conflict in European and Asian countries.

Further, while facilitating causal inference by improving the quality of counterfactuals, the focus on active SD disputes also has a drawback. This is so because SD disputes can become inactive after SD referendums. For example, the Estonians held a referendum on their independence in 1991 and became independent in the same year. Given the exclusive focus on active SD disputes, the effects of Estonia's referendum cannot be estimated for 1992 onwards. This is likely to introduce a certain amount of bias because SD disputes that have become inactive after a referendum are necessarily nonviolent. That said, relatively few cases are concerned and the amount of bias should therefore be small.[3]

[2]As stated in chapter 5, the SDM-Eurasia dataset also contains a random sample of all SD disputes, but the number of SD referendums in this sample is rather small. Reassuringly, the results are however similar if the models reported below are re-estimated with the random sample cases, even though the variance estimates tend to be larger, probably as a result of the smaller number of cases.

[3]The Eurasian sample I will draw on primarily covers all years after the referendum in 72 of totally 103 dispute-years assigned with an SD referendum (73%) (or at least all years until 2012, the last year I cover). In 17 of the remaining 31 cases some or all years after a referendum are missing because a group attained national independence, as in the case of the Estonians. In another 14 cases some subsequent years are missing because an SDM abandoned its claim to self-rule in the aftermath of a referendum (14%), even though it did not attain independence. For example, the Souther Mongols in China voted on SD in 1945 but their movement was suppressed in 1949. However, in all but three cases of these cases ten or more years are covered after the referendum, the longest time frame considered in the analysis (see below).

When analyzing separatist armed conflict (or armed conflict more generally), an important consideration to be made is that we are in effect looking at two different phenomena: onsets of armed conflict (i.e., transitions from peace at time *t-1* to war at time *t*) and cases of ongoing armed conflict (if there is war at time *t* while there has also been war at time *t-1*). Expressed differently, we are looking at two types of durations: the duration of peace until a separatist conflict emerges and the duration of separatist armed conflicts until they end (for the equivalence of binary time-series cross-section data and duration data see Beck, Katz & Tucker 1998). This distinction is important because separatist armed conflict onset (a.k.a. the duration of peace) and separatist armed conflict continuation (a.k.a. the duration of separatist armed conflict) are likely to be driven by different theoretical processes (Elbadawi & Sambanis 2002, Beck, Epstein, Jackman & O'Halloran 2001). Thus, some variables may differentially affect separatist armed conflict onset (henceforth 'conflict onset') and separatist armed conflict continuation (henceforth 'conflict continuation). If my theory is correct, this should not apply to SD referendums—H7.1 and H7.2 would suggest that agreed and unilateral SD referendums decrease or increase, respectively, the risk of separatist armed conflict irrespectively of whether there was war or peace in the previous time period. However, there are good theoretical reasons to expect that other variables have disparate effects on conflict onset and continuation. Take the example of the level of democracy. Violent conflicts are often argued to emerge most often in anocracies (semi-democracies) whereas both full-blown democracies and full-blown autocracies are argued to see fewer conflict onsets because they are better than anocracies at conflict resolution and repression, respectively (Hegre et al. 2001, Fearon & Laitin 2003). However, if an armed conflict nonetheless breaks out in a democracy, conflicts have been argued to last longer there because democracies face higher constraints on the use of force, which renders the ruthless suppression of a rebellion more difficult (Cunningham, Gleditsch & Salehyan 2009). Thus, the level of democracy and conflict onset may have a bell-shaped relationship, whereas the risk of conflict continuation may linearly increase with increasing levels of democracy. This bears important implications for the causal identification strategy. As there are good reasons to believe that some variables differentially affect conflict onset and continuation, the estimation method must allow variables to differentially affect conflict onset and continuation. Not doing so could lead to biased estimates as we would not adequately account for the differential relationship of variables such as democracy with conflict onset and continuation.

Following this reasoning, I model the relationship between SD referendums and separatist

armed conflict using transition models (Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub & Limongi 2000, Beck et al. 2001, McGrath 2015). Transition models condition the analysis on the lagged dependent variable and thereby allow covariates to differentially affect transitions from 0 to 1 (conflict onsets) and transitions from 1 to 1 (conflict continuation).[4] Accordingly, I subset the universe of SD disputes to cases with no conflict in the previous year and to cases with conflict in the previous year. I then estimate separate models testing the effects of SD referendums on conflict onset and conflict continuation, respectively.[5]

In both the conflict onset and the conflict continuation models, the dependent variables are binaries that are coded 1 if there was a separatist armed conflict in a given dispute-year, 0 otherwise. I cull the data on separatist armed conflict from the SDM-Eurasia dataset. SDM-Eurasia's measure of separatist armed conflict notably includes both cases of high-intensity armed conflicts (civil wars) with hundreds or even thousands of casualties and armed conflicts with significantly lower intensity.[6] Refer to chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion of SDM-Eurasia's separatist armed conflict measure. Table 7.1 gives summary statistics.[7]

I evaluate the effects of SD referendums across two different time frames. H7.1 suggests that agreed SD referendums affect conflict probabilities both in the short and longer term, whereas H7.2 suggests that unilateral SD referendums affect conflict probabilities primarily in the short term. To test both short- and long-term implications of SD referendums I include,

[4]Transition models invoke a standard first-order Markov assumption, which in our case means that whether or not we see separatist armed conflict at time t is assumed to be a function of whether there was conflict at time *t-1* conditional on covariates.

[5]Transition models can also be estimated with multiplicative interaction models that interact all covariates with the lagged dependent variable. Because the dependent variable is binary and the variance of the underlying latent errors is assumed to be one, full and separated transition models yield identical results without loss of estimation efficiency (Beck et al. 2001). Since this facilitates interpretation, I consistently report results based on separate transition models.

[6]There are both advantages and disadvantages to the inclusion of low-level violence cases. The main downside is that it induces heterogeneity. The conflict between Russia and Chechnya caused dozens of thousands of deaths, whereas the conflict between Yugoslavia and Slovenia caused fewer than 100. In many ways, this makes the two cases difficult to compare. However, and more importantly in the present context, a higher casualty threshold would also mean that important dynamics are missed. In Slovenia, there was a referendum on independence in December 1990, approximately six months before violence erupted. A high casualty threshold would erroneously treat Slovenia as a case where a referendum was associated with peace. Similar cases include the 1987 referendum in New Caledonia and the 2006 referendum in South Ossetia.

[7]I drop the separatist armed conflict that erupted in South Kordofan, Sudan, in 2011, which SDM-Eurasia associates to the SD dispute involving the Southerners in Sudan. This conflict erupted after the independence referendum in South Sudan held in the same year, but it would be wrong to establish a connection between the two. South Kordofan was originally also promised a referendum, but Khartoum ultimately revoked the promise. Thus, the conflict in South Kordofan was less a product of the referendum that actually took place in South Sudan, but more of the referendum that did not take place in South Kordofan.

Table 7.1: Frequency of separatist armed conflict onset and continuation, 1945–2012

	Freq.	**At risk**	**%**
All countries			
Conflict onset $(Y_t = 1 \mid Y_{t-1} = 0)$	217	11667	1.86
Conflict continuation $(Y_t = 1 \mid Y_{t-1} = 1)$	2159	2336	92.42
Eurasia			
Conflict onset $(Y_t = 1 \mid Y_{t-1} = 0)$	126	7216	1.75
Conflict continuation $(Y_t = 1 \mid Y_{t-1} = 1)$	1424	1530	93.07

in different models, pairs of dummies that indicate occurrences of agreed and unilateral SD referendums in the previous dispute-year and the previous ten dispute-years, respectively. All in all, I therefore estimate four models: two to evaluate the short- and long-term implications of agreed and unilateral SD referendums for conflict onset, and another two to evaluate the short- and long-term implications of agreed and unilateral SD referendums for conflict continuation. In the robustness section, I also show results using alternative time frames. Note that I do not consider the effects of SD referendums on conflict onset and continuation in the same years due to possible reverse causality.

Again, the data on SD referendums is culled from the Contested Sovereignty dataset (Mendez & Germann 2016), following the procedure detailed in chapter 4. SD referendums were matched to an SD dispute if the referendum issue directly concerned a given state-SDM dyad, as described in chapter 5. Note that in selected cases the same SD referendum relates to multiple SD disputes and is therefore assigned to multiple dyads.[8] Also note that in a small number of cases the same dispute-year saw more than one referendum (see chapter 6).[9]

I control for a range of factors that are likely to influence incidences of agreed or unilateral SD referendums and conflict onset or continuation. Table 7.2 gives summary statistics for all independent variables in the conflict onset models. Table 7.3 does the same for the conflict continuation models. In both cases, coverage is limited to European and Asian countries as not

[8] In the robustness section below I show that the results remain similar if these multiply assigned SD referendums are dropped.

[9] A special case emerges when an SD group transfers from one host state to another after a referendum. For example, the Slavs in Transnistria voted in 1989, and thus shortly before Moldova became independent, in a unilateral referendum on an autonomy solution. I assign these referendums to both the old and new host. Thus, the dummy indicating unilateral referendums in the previous 10 years is coded with 1 in 1990 and 1991 for the Transnistrian Slavs under the header of the USSR, and then from 1991 to 1999 for the Transnistrian Slavs under the header of Moldova.

Table 7.2: Summary statistics for independent variables in conflict onset models

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	Obs.
Agreed SD referendum$_{t-1}$	<0.01	*n.a.*	0	1	7216
Agreed SD referendum$_{t-1/t-10}$	0.04	*n.a.*	0	1	7216
Unilateral SD referendum$_{t-1}$	<0.01	*n.a.*	0	1	7216
Unilateral SD referendum$_{t-1/t-10}$	0.04	*n.a.*	0	1	7216
Democracy$_{t-1}$	5.27	6.05	-10	10	7144
Democracy$_{t-1}{}^2$	64.39	32.72	0	100	7144
Number of ethnic groups	5.58	3.72	1	13	7161
ln(group size)	-4.44	2.01	-10.41	-0.2	7216
Government inclusion	0.28	*n.a.*	0	1	7216
De facto independence	0.02	*n.a.*	0	1	7216
Government repression$_{t-1}$	0.04	*n.a.*	0	1	7216
Secession claim	0.23	*n.a.*	0	1	7216
Nonviolent campaign$_{t-1}$	0.01	*n.a.*	0	1	7216
Year = 1970-1990	0.28	*n.a.*	0	1	7216
Year = 1991-2012	0.55	*n.a.*	0	1	7216
Self-rule concession$_{t-1}$	0.02	*n.a.*	0	1	7216
Self-rule concession$_{t-1/t-10}$	0.16	*n.a.*	0	1	7216
Peace years	19.08	18.32	0	126	7216
Peace years^2	699.49	1410.46	0	15876	7216
Peace years^3	36911.9	126956.84	0	2000376	7216

Table 7.3: Summary statistics for independent variables in conflict continuation models

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	Obs.
Agreed SD referendum$_{t-1}$	<0.01	*n.a.*	0	1	1530
Agreed SD referendum$_{t-1/t-10}$	0.01	*n.a.*	0	1	1530
Unilateral SD referendum$_{t-1}$	0.01	*n.a.*	0	1	1530
Unilateral SD referendum$_{t-1/t-10}$	0.06	*n.a.*	0	1	1530
Democracy$_{t-1}$	0.31	7.36	-9	10	1504
Democracy$_{t-1}{}^2$	54.24	22.52	0	100	1504
Number of ethnic groups	8.59	3.36	1	13	1524
ln(group size)	-4.45	1.58	-8.52	-1.12	1530
Government inclusion	0.11	*n.a.*	0	1	1530
De facto independence	0.16	*n.a.*	0	1	1530
Government repression$_{t-1}$	0.08	*n.a.*	0	1	1530
Secession claim	0.66	*n.a.*	0	1	1530
Nonviolent campaign$_{t-1}$	0.02	*n.a.*	0	1	1530
Year = 1970-1990	0.37	*n.a.*	0	1	1530
Year = 1991-2012	0.42	*n.a.*	0	1	1530
Self-rule concession$_{t-1}$	0.03	*n.a.*	0	1	1530
Self-rule concession$_{t-1/t-10}$	0.17	*n.a.*	0	1	1530
Conflict years	15.13	13.56	0	67	1530
Conflict years^2	412.65	684.20	0	4489	1530
Conflict years^3	14938.25	36515.27	0	300763	1530

all control variables are available globally.

First, I control for the level of democracy. As argued above, democracy may affect both conflict onset and continuation, whereas chapter 6 showed that democracy at the same time also affects occurrences of agreed and unilateral SD referendums.

Next, I control for de facto independence. Chapter 6 showed that de facto independence strongly predicts unilateral SD referendums initiated by separatists.[10] At the same time, existing work suggests that de facto independence strongly shapes the emergence of separatist armed conflict. Groups that have de facto separated from their host state directly threaten the state's territorial integrity, which is likely to incentivize violent attempts by the state to regain control over the territory. Furthermore, de facto independent groups tend to be highly committed to the goal of secession and often have their own standing armies, thus facilitating violent confrontations. We may therefore see more conflict onsets if SD groups have established de facto independence (Cederman, Wimmer & Min 2010, Florea 2014). De facto independence may also affect the duration of separatist armed conflicts, though it is not clear how. On the one hand, de facto independent groups tend to be militarily stronger than other groups, which may increase chances for a negotiated settlement or a rebel victory and thus lead to shorter conflicts. On the other hand, de facto independent groups often have external military assistance. Armenia, for example, provides assistance to Nagorno-Karabakh, Turkey to Northern Cyprus, and Russia to South Ossetia and Abkhazia. De facto independent groups also tend to be strongly committed to the goal of secession, which may decrease chances for a negotiated settlement. Both external military assistance and a strong commitment to the goal of secession should increase conflict duration (Florea 2014).

Chapter 6 provided evidence that unilateral SD referendums and, to a more limited extent, agreed SD referendums become more likely if SDMs make claims for outright secession (as opposed to claims for internal autonomy). Whether SDMs claim outright secession is likely to

[10] A complication arises because while de facto independence has a strong positive correlation with separatist-sponsored unilateral referendums, it also has a weak negative correlation with the other type of unilateral referendum, state-sponsored referendums. Analogous issues emerge with some other control variables, such as democracy. Fully accounting for the effects of control variables such as de facto independence would make it necessary to separate the different types of agreed and unilateral SD referendums. However, the problems for causal identification when the sub-types are combined are unlikely to be severe. Most of the differences between the sub-types emerge due to varying levels of statistical significance rather than differently signed coefficients. In other cases, such as de facto independence, one or both of the contrasting effects are weak and not statistically significant. At the same time, combining the sub-types allows for the most direct test of H7.1 and H7.2, and it also increases estimation efficiency. I re-estimate all models while separating the different sub-types of agreed and unilateral SD referendums in the robustness section. The results remain similar, barring lower levels of statistical significance in some cases probably due to a loss of efficiency.

matter also for conflict processes, rendering the type of SD claim an important control variable. A claim to secession makes it less likely that states and SDMs can agree on a peaceful solution. States value their territorial integrity and thus often fight those that challenge their hold on territory (Cunningham 2014). Further, secessionist groups are more radical and may therefore be more willing to violently challenge the government. SD groups that demand outright secession are therefore likely to experience more and longer conflicts.

Furthermore, I control for state repression. Chapter 6 showed that state repression increases incidences of unilateral SD referendums but decreases incidences of agreed SD referendums. State repression is also likely to affect the risk of conflict onset and continuation, though in differential ways. On the one hand, state repression makes rebellion more costly (Tilly 1978, McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly 2001). On the other hand, state repression may also motivate rebellion by nurturing grievances against the state and increasing perceptions that nonviolence is ineffective (Lichbach 1987, Petersen 2002, Rasler 1996). Different mechanisms thus suggest that repression can make conflict onset and continuation both more or less likely. That said, the specific type of state repression under consideration here (curtailments of groups' self-rule and other rights) appears likely to increase conflict probabilities, given that curtailments of group rights clearly affect the level of grievance against the state but much less directly mobilization costs (Sambanis & Zinn 2004).

Chapter 6 suggests that nonviolent campaigns increase the probabilities of both unilateral and agreed SD referendums. At the same time, nonviolent campaigns may also affect conflict probabilities. Nonviolent campaigns confront states with a choice between accommodation and repression of the demands of protesters (Davenport 1995, Pierskella 2010). If states choose repression, this may fuel an escalation cycle and therefore make conflict more likely. If they choose accommodation, this may prevent conflict. Overall, it appears likely that nonviolent campaigns increase the risk of conflict onsets (because states would feel less threatened if there was no protest campaign) but make it more likely that an ongoing conflict ends (because nonviolent campaigns tend to inflict higher costs on states than violence, making accommodation more likely (Stephan & Chenoweth 2008, Chenoweth & Stephan 2011)). For these reasons, I control for nonviolent campaigns.

All types of SD referendums have become more frequent over time, even conditional on covariates (see chapter 6). Simultaneously, time has also been argued to affect conflict onset and continuation, thus it is important to account for calendar time. Goldstein (2011), for example,

argues that violence has decreased since the end of the Second World War because peacekeeping and other interventions by international organizations have become increasingly common (also see Doyle & Sambanis 2006, Beardsley, Cunningham & White 2015). Gurr (2000*a*) argues that the frequency of ethnic conflicts has declined since the mid-1990s due to a new culture of accommodation and compromise that helps prevent new conflicts and end ongoing conflicts (also see Cederman, Gleditsch & Wucherpfennig 2016). Kalyvas & Balcells (2010) argue that the Cold War period saw longer civil wars because the two superpowers provided support to allied states and rebels across the globe. Taking a broader and more long-term perspective, Pinker (2011) argues that humankind is pacifying due to a general "civilizing process."

All control variables mentioned thus far have strong and robust (partial) correlations with SD referendum occurrences (see chapter 6). In addition, I control for three factors that chapter 6 showed to be only weakly (and sometimes inconsistently) correlated with SD referendums, but based on existing work appear likely to affect the onset and continuation of separatist armed conflict: the number of ethnic groups, the challenger's demographic size, and government inclusion. Even variables that are only weakly correlated with the treatment may induce omitted variable bias if they are related to the outcome of interest (Caliendo & Kopeinig 2008). And all three factors are frequently mentioned as predictors of conflict onset or continuation. First, Walter (2006*a*) argues that states with many ethnic groups should be highly concerned with their reputation and therefore avoid making concessions to self-rule challengers. States should therefore be more likely to fight a self-rule challenger if the number of ethnic groups is high, implying a higher risk for conflict onset (on the role of reputation for conflict onset also see Schädel 2016). Further, separatist armed conflicts in states with many ethnic groups are likely to last longer because governments have fewer incentives to make concessions. Second, Cederman, Wimmer & Min (2010) argue that larger ethnic groups should experience more conflict onsets due to their higher mobilizational capacity. At the same time, large groups can mount a more effective military challenge to states, which could lead to longer conflicts as large groups are more able to resist pressure by the government, but also to shorter conflicts as negotiated settlements and rebel victories become more likely (Cunningham, Gleditsch & Salehyan 2009). And third, government in- or exclusion is increasingly considered a major determinant of civil war. Ethnic groups that are excluded from state power are ruled by members of other ethnic groups. This often entails a series of material and other disadvantages and is thus likely to add to perceptions of grievance against the state as well as to commitment and solidarity among

group members. Groups that are not represented in the national government are therefore argued to be more likely to fight the government (Wimmer, Cederman & Min 2009, Cederman, Wimmer & Min 2010, Cederman, Gleditsch & Buhaug 2013) and more likely to sustain a rebellion (Wucherpfennig, Metternich, Cederman & Gleditsch 2012).

The final control variable is major self-rule concessions: instances where the state agrees to grant a group a significant level of autonomy or even independence. Agreed SD referendums often lead to significant territorial reforms.[11] Catalonia, for example, gained a significant degree of regional autonomy after a 1979 referendum. East Timor gained formal independence after a 1999 referendum. These referendum-induced territorial reforms remove some or even all points of contention between states and SDMs, and so are likely to decrease the risk of conflict onset and/or continuation. Controlling for significant self-rule concessions ensures that the referendum variables do not pick up the effects of the territorial reforms.

It should be noted that controlling for self-rule concessions is not entirely unproblematic. One of the mechanisms suggested by theory which links agreed SD referendums to peace is that agreed SD referendums sometimes provide a way out of negotiation deadlock (see above and chapter 3). In some cases, agreed SD referendums therefore enable a territorial reform where no territorial reform would otherwise be possible. For example, Indonesia may well not have agreed to East Timor's independence without the referendum (Collin 2015, Fernandes 2011). In such cases, controlling for self-rule concessions induces post-treatment bias (Rosenbaum 1984, Caliendo & Kopeinig 2008, King & Zeng 2007). However, the post-treatment bias is almost certainly smaller than the omitted variable bias that would be induced when omitting self-rule concessions from the specification. Further, while the emerging post-treatment bias is likely to understate the peace-enhancing effect of agreed SD referendums, omitting self-rule concessions would likely overstate their peace-enhancing effect. Controlling for self-rule concessions thus represents a conservative approach.[12]

[11] In rare cases, SD referendums that are unilaterally initiated by states can also lead to significant territorial reforms that are, however, nonetheless rejected by the separatists. The 1989 referendum in Mindanao constitutes an example, as it led to meaningful autonomy in Mindanao (though only in a fraction of the territory claimed by Mindanao's Muslims).

[12] That referendums may constitute necessary pre-requirements for territorial reforms is not equally problematic in all cases. Relatively unproblematic are cases where referendums are constitutionally required before the implementation of a territorial reform. For example, the 1979 autonomy referendum in Catalonia was required by the Spanish constitution (Thompson 1989). In these cases, controlling for self-rule concessions is hardly problematic. Catalonia may not have gained autonomy without a referendum, but given the constitutional requirement it would be nonsensical to assign the effect of the autonomy solution to the referendum.

In sum, then, I control for a total of nine of the 13 determinants of SD referendums discussed in chapter 6 plus major self-rule concessions. I implicitly also control for prior separatist armed conflict, one of the four remaining determinants of SD referendums discussed in chapter 6, because transition models subset the sample to cases with and without conflict incidences in the previous year. I do not control for the remaining three determinants of SD referendums discussed in chapter 6 (mandatory referendum provisions, citizen's initiative provisions, and SD referendum frequencies in nearby countries) because I am unaware of any argument in the extant literature suggesting that these variables would affect conflict onset or continuation.[13]

The measurement of most of the control variables has already been discussed in chapter 6 and remains unchanged. The level of democracy is measured with the one-year lag of the polity2 scale (Marshall, Gurr & Jaggers 2014). I include both the linear and the quadratic term of democracy to account for the expectation that the risk of conflict onset is highest in semi-democracies, as well as the curvilinear effect of democracy on the frequency of separatist-initiated unilateral referendums found in chapter 6. Further, de facto independence is measured with a dummy denoting whether an SD group de facto exercises control over its homeland (SDM-Eurasia); the type of SD claim with a dummy denoting whether an SDM dominantly claims outright secession in a given dispute-year (SDM-Eurasia); state repression with a dummy indicating whether the state restricted a group's autonomy, cultural rights, or access to central state power in the previous year (SDM-Eurasia); nonviolent campaigns with a dummy denoting large-scale protest campaigns in the previous dispute-year (Chenoweth & Lewis 2013*b*, Lakey 2011); calendar time with two dummies denoting 1970–1990 and 1991–2012, respectively; the number of ethnic groups

[13]It is therefore possible that these three variables satisfy the exclusion restriction and could be used as instruments for agreed and unilateral SD referendums. The advantage of valid instruments is that this allows for the estimation of causal effects independent of unobserved confounders (Angrist & Pischke 2009). However, it is difficult to say whether the exclusion restriction really holds. This would require that mandatory referendum provisions, citizen's initiative provisions, and SD referendum frequencies in nearby countries are related to conflict onset and continuation only via SD referendums. However, we cannot fully exclude the possibility that the three variables affect separatist armed conflict in yet unknown ways. For example, it is possible that provisions for citizen's initiatives provide a safety valve for opposition groups to raise their concerns and thereby decrease the risk of violence (Fatke & Freitag (2013) make a similar argument regarding nonviolent protest). Further, the number of SD referendums in nearby countries is by definition strongly regionally clustered and may therefore also pick up other regional factors that could have an independent effect on separatist armed conflict (see below). If the exclusion restriction is violated, instrumental variable techniques tend to yield inflated standard errors and increased rather than decreased bias (Stolzenberg & Relles 1990). Even assuming the exclusion restriction holds, provisions for mandatory referendums and citizen's initiatives and, to a lesser extent, also the number of nearby SD referendums have relatively weak and in part inconsistent correlations with incidences of SD referendums (see chapter 6). This could give rise to a weak instrument problem, implying inconsistent and inefficient estimates (Murray 2006). For these reasons, I refrain from instrumenting for agreed and unilateral SD referendums with referendum provisions or the number of SD referendums in nearby countries.

with a count of the number of ethnic groups that make up at least 1% of a country's population (Fearon 2003, Central Intelligence Agency 2016); the SD challenger's demographic size with the natural logarithm of the SD group's population size relative to the country population (SDM-Eurasia); and government inclusion with a dummy denoting whether members of the SD group are meaningfully represented in the national executive (SDM-Eurasia). For more details on the measurement of these variables refer to chapter 6.

I measure self-rule concessions, the remaining control variable, with a dummy indicating major concessions made by the state in the form of increased autonomy or independence. Self-rule concessions are identified using data on autonomy and independence concessions from the SDM-Eurasia dataset. However, I deviate from SDM-Eurasia's conceptualization of autonomy and independence concessions in several important ways. SDM-Eurasia includes autonomy concessions that led to relatively small increases in self-rule and also counts some concessions that were only partially implemented. The measure used here, first introduced in chapter 5, drops concessions that were only patchily implemented and only counts autonomy concessions that led to significant increases in the level of self-rule.[14] This was done for two reasons. First, because strong concessions are more likely to affect conflict outcomes. Second, so that the coding of a self-rule concession aligns with the coding of SD referendums. The Contested Sovereignty dataset, from where the data on SD referendums is drawn, only codes a referendum if core competencies of the state are at stake (Aubert, Germann & Mendez 2015). Thus, the focus on major self-rule concessions ensures that the measure picks up the effects of the sort of concessions that might result from an SD referendum.

Having discussed the measurement, I now turn to the estimation strategy. Both outcomes under study, conflict onset and conflict continuation, represent binaries. This suggests a log-linear estimator designed for binary responses, such as logit or probit (Aldrich & Nelson 1984, Long 1997).[15] However, as in chapter 6, we again face separation issues. As shown

[14]In addition, I modified the timing of a small number of concessions so as to align them with SD referendums. For example, I made sure that East Timor's independence is coded in 1999, the year of the East Timorese independence referendum, and not 2002, the year East Timor actually gained independence.

[15]Other log-linear estimators often drawn on in the conflict literature include semi-parametric and parametric duration models, such as the Cox and Weibull models. In the existing literature, duration models tend to be used to model conflict continuation (a.k.a. the duration of conflicts) (e.g. Cunningham, Gleditsch & Salehyan 2009, Fearon 2004, Wucherpfennig et al. 2012), whereas logit and probit models are typically used to model conflict onsets (e.g. Cederman, Wimmer & Min 2010, Collier & Hoeffler 2004, Fearon & Laitin 2003). In principle, duration models can though also be used to model conflict onset (a.k.a. the duration of peace) (see e.g. Hegre et al. 2001), while logit and probit can also be used to model conflict continuation (see e.g. Elbadawi & Sambanis

below, there is not a single conflict onset after an agreed SD referendum, whereas conflict always continues if there was conflict and a unilateral SD referendum in the previous year. Thus, agreed SD referendums perfectly explain the absence of conflict onset while unilateral SD referendum perfectly explain the presence of conflict continuation, implying quasicomplete separation. Under quasicomplete separation, valid maximum likelihood estimates do not exist for the offending variables (Albert & Anderson 1984, Heinze & Schemper 2002, Rainey 2016, Zorn 2005). To avoid problems related to quasicomplete separation, I estimate all models with OLS, as in chapter 6. Due to the linear link function, OLS can extrapolate to the region of interest even if there is quasicomplete separation (Heinze & Schemper 2002, Heinze 2006). As noted in chapter 6, the application of OLS to binary responses comes at a certain cost. Most notably, parameter estimates tend to be somewhat less accurate than in log-linear estimates. However, the differences tend to be small (Angrist & Pischke 2009, Beck 2015) and OLS can therefore be justified if its use facilitates other estimation issues, such as quasicomplete separation. Following Wooldridge (2010, p. 562), I consistently use heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors. In the robustness section, I also present results based on a log-linear estimator (logit regression). Results are very similar for those variables that do not suffer from quasicomplete separation. A more detailed discussion of (quasicomplete) separation and OLS for binary responses can be found in the data and methods section in chapter 6.

Finally, we observe the same units (SD disputes) over time. This is likely to create temporal dependence, thus violating the assumption of independent observations and often leading to underestimates of variability (Beck, Katz & Tucker 1998). To counter temporal dependence, I cluster standard errors by the SD dispute. Furthermore, following Carter & Signorino (2010) I add cubic polynomials of the number of years of peaceful coexistence between an SDM and the state (conflict onset models) or the number of years an armed conflict is already under way

2002). That said, it is important to note that duration models do not solve the separation issue noted below; just like logit and probit, duration models yield invalid estimates in the presence of complete or quasicomplete separation. An additional problem with duration models in the present context is that while they are designed for continuous time intervals, the time interval analyzed here is discrete. While conflicts break out or end at any given points in time, the data we are analyzing only tells us whether a conflict broke out or ended in a given year. Hence, we are dealing with a discrete time interval. Duration models can still be used if the observed time intervals are discrete, but estimation is unproblematic only as long as the ratio of the length of the time intervals to the typical duration of a spell of time until an event occurs is small. It is questionable whether this holds in the present case, especially for the conflict continuation/duration case. The average duration of a conflict is about nine years (see chapter 5). Thus the average ratio is only one to nine. Duration models become more suitable if time is measured in days or months rather than years (Jenkins 2008).

(conflict continuation models) to the specification.[16]

7.4 Results

We are now ready to evaluate the hypotheses regarding the relationship between SD referendums and separatist armed conflict. I proceed in two steps. First, I focus on the effects of agreed and unilateral SD referendums on conflict onset. Then, I show the results for conflict continuation.

7.4.1 Conflict Onset

I begin with a descriptive analysis of the frequency of conflict onset in the aftermath of SD referendums. If my theory is correct, there should be few conflict onsets after agreed SD referendums (H7.1), but many after unilateral SD referendums, especially in the initial years (H7.2). Table 7.4 offers a first empirical assessment. The unit of analysis is dispute-years at risk of a conflict onset (i.e., dispute-years that were at peace in the previous year). The data covers all noncolonial SD disputes across the globe from 1945–2012. It becomes evident that SD disputes turn violent only relatively rarely. Out of a total of 11,667 dispute-years at risk of a conflict onset, conflict actually broke out in 217 cases, or 1.86%. This can be seen as the baseline risk of conflict onset.

Table 7.4 shows that as expected, the frequency of conflict onsets is lower after agreed SD referendums but higher after unilateral SD referendums. Since SD referendums may affect conflict onset both in the short and longer term, Table 7.4 shows conflict onset probabilities up to ten years after a referendum.[17] It turns out that there is not a single outbreak of separatist armed conflict up to ten years after agreed SD referendums. Indeed, there is not a single conflict onset in any year after an agreed SD referendum, even beyond the ten years shown in Table 7.4. This provides initial support to H7.1.

Conversely, in line with H7.2, the frequency of conflict onset increases after unilateral SD

[16]In addition to countering temporal dependence, controlling for "peace years" and "conflict years" in the conflict onset and conflict continuation models, respectively, addresses potential bias emerging from correlations between conflict histories, the deployment of SD referendums, and conflict onset or continuation.

[17]The number of dispute-years at risk of a conflict onset often varies from year to year. There are several reasons. Previously nonviolent disputes may turn violent, which means they are no longer at risk of an onset. Conversely, previously violent disputes may turn nonviolent and therefore become at risk of another conflict onset. Further, some SD disputes may leave the sample altogether as groups become independent, change their host state, because they stop claiming self-rule (which is though relatively rare), or because the dataset covers only the years until 2012.

Table 7.4: Probability of conflict onset after agreed and unilateral SD referendums, 1945–2012

Scenario		**At risk**	**Conflict onset**	**%**
Baseline		11667	217	1.86
Agreed SD referendum at:	*t-1*	63	0	0
	t-2	65	0	0
	t-3	63	0	0
	t-4	60	0	0
	t-5	56	0	0
	t-6	55	0	0
	t-7	52	0	0
	t-8	51	0	0
	t-9	50	0	0
	t-10	48	0	0
Unilateral SD referendum at:	*t-1*	49	7	14.29
	t-2	42	3	7.14
	t-3	45	0	0
	t-4	49	2	4.08
	t-5	46	0	0
	t-6	49	2	4.08
	t-7	45	1	2.22
	t-8	45	0	0
	t-9	45	1	2.22
	t-10	45	0	0

referendums, especially in the short term. Out of the 49 dispute-years that had a unilateral SD referendum in the previous year and are at risk of a conflict onset, we actually observe a conflict onset in 7 cases, or about 14%. This is more than seven times the baseline risk of a conflict onset. We observe another 3 conflict onsets in the second year after a unilateral SD referendum, implying a lower but still above-average probability of conflict onset of 7%. Further analysis suggests that most of the unilateral referendums that led to a conflict onset in one of subsequent two years were initiated by separatists, but some are also state-initiated. (Note that there are many more separatist-initiated than state-initiated unilateral SD referendums.) Examples of separatist-sponsored unilateral referendums followed by a conflict onset include the referendums staged by India's Nagas (1951), Moldova's Transnistrian Slavs (1989 and 1991), Yugoslavia's Slovenes (1990), and the Bosnian Serbs (1991). An example of a state-sponsored unilateral referendum followed by a conflict onset is New Caledonia's 1987 independence referendum, which was designed to reaffirm New Caledonia's continued ties with France and boycotted by the Kanaks (the local indigenous group). Extending the focus beyond the two years following a

referendum, the probability of conflict drops significantly and hovers between 0% and 4%. If we combine the events three years after unilateral SD referendums up to ten years after unilateral SD referendums, the probability of a conflict onset is about the same as the baseline risk (1.6%).

Do these patterns hold if we control for confounders? Table 7.5 shows the results. As some control variables are only available for SD disputes in European and Asian countries, only these countries can now be considered. Again, the unit of analysis is dispute-years at risk of a conflict onset. Model 1 considers the effects of agreed and unilateral SD referendums in the previous year, whereas model 2 considers the effects when combining referendums in the previous ten years. In combination, this allows for an evaluation of both the short- and long-term consequences of SD referendums. Both models are estimated with OLS. Positive coefficients indicate that conflict onset becomes more likely, whereas negative coefficients indicate that conflict onset becomes less likely. Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors clustered at the SD dispute level are reported in brackets.

In line with H7.1, an agreed SD referendum in the previous year renders conflict onset less likely (see model 1). The effect is only weakly significant ($p < 0.10$), which may though partly be a function of the low number of cases. (Only 35 dispute-years had an agreed SD referendum in the previous year.) In model 2, which considers the effects of agreed SD referendums in the previous ten years, the size of the effect increases (from minus 1 percentage point to minus 1.5 percentage points) and becomes highly significant ($p < 0.01$). Notably, as both models control for self-rule concessions, these results apply independently of the major territorial reforms that are sometimes triggered by agreed SD referendums.

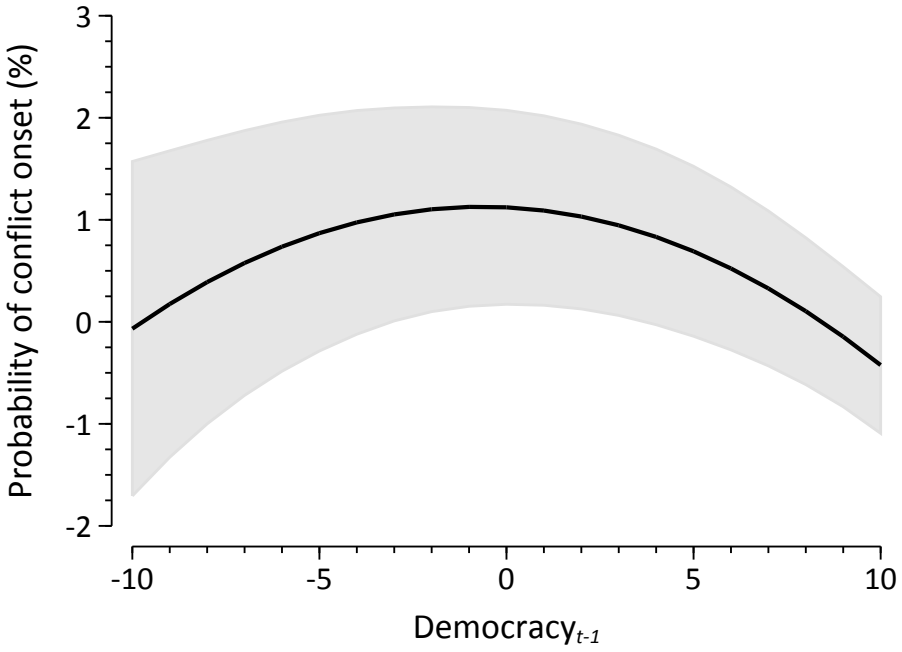
Turning to unilateral SD referendums, model 1 shows that a unilateral SD referendum in the previous year significantly increases the probability of a conflict onset by about 14 percentage points ($p < 0.05$) after controlling for confounders. The bivariate assessment reported above has suggested a similar increase. This is, however, notably not due to the feebleness of the control variables. In the Eurasian sample, conflict onset is yet more likely after a unilateral SD referendum (19%). Accounting for covariates reduces the effect by almost 5 percentage points, thus confirming that unilateral SD referendums are endogenous to the risk of separatist armed conflict. Turning to model 2, which looks at SD referendums in the previous ten years, we see that the effect of unilateral referendums on conflict onset becomes much smaller and is no longer statistically significant. In sum, we can conclude that in line with H7.2 unilateral SD referendums increase the probability of a conflict onset in the short term but not in the longer

Table 7.5: Estimates of the effects of agreed and unilateral SD referendums on conflict onset in European and Asian countries, 1945–2012

	(1)	(2)
SD referendums		
Agreed SD referendum$_{t\text{-}1}$	−0.010*	
	(0.005)	
Agreed SD referendum$_{t\text{-}1/t\text{-}10}$		−0.015***
		(0.005)
Unilateral SD referendum$_{t\text{-}1}$	0.144**	
	(0.068)	
Unilateral SD referendum$_{t\text{-}1/t\text{-}10}$		0.011
		(0.013)
Controls		
Democracy$_{t\text{-}1}$	−0.000	−0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Democracy$_{t\text{-}1}{}^2$	−0.000*	−0.000*
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Number of ethnic groups	0.002***	0.002***
	(0.000)	(0.000)
ln(group size)	0.000	0.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Government inclusion	0.000	0.001
	(0.005)	(0.005)
De facto independence	0.086**	0.090**
	(0.035)	(0.036)
Government repression$_{t\text{-}1}$	0.036**	0.037***
	(0.014)	(0.014)
Secession claim	0.022***	0.022***
	(0.005)	(0.006)
Nonviolent campaign$_{t\text{-}1}$	0.070**	0.078**
	(0.033)	(0.035)
Year = 1970-1990	−0.006	−0.006
	(0.006)	(0.006)
Year = 1991-2012	−0.013**	−0.012**
	(0.005)	(0.005)
Self-rule concession$_{t\text{-}1}$	−0.001	
	(0.012)	
Self-rule concession$_{t\text{-}1/t\text{-}10}$		−0.001
		(0.005)
Temporal dependence		
Peace years	−0.001*	−0.001**
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Peace years^2	0.000*	0.000**
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Peace years^3	−0.000**	−0.000**
	(0.000)	(0.000)
R^2	0.045	0.040
N	7107	7107

Note: Both models estimated with OLS. Estimates for the constant not shown. Two-tailed heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors clustered at the SD dispute level in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure 7.1: Effect of democracy on conflict onset



term.

Having discussed the main results, I now turn to a short discussion of the effects of the control variables. The majority of the control variables has the expected correlations with conflict onset. De facto independence, government repression in the form of curtailments of group rights, nonviolent campaigns, and claims to secession all lead to significant increases in the probability of conflict onset. In line with the reputation theory of conflict, the probability of conflict onset increases significantly with the number of ethnic groups in a country. Further, in line with arguments suggesting that violence has decreased in the post-Cold War period due to a new culture of accommodation and external intervention, I find that conflict onsets have become less likely since 1991. Finally, Figure 7.1 shows that democracy has the bell-shaped relationship with conflict onset that would be expected based on the "murder-in-the-middle" hypothesis.[18] However, the confidence interval is pretty wide for low levels on the democracy scale. Further analysis suggests that the difference between a full autocracy (-10 on the democracy scale) and a medium anocracy (0) is not statistically significant, while the difference between a medium anocracy (0) and a full democracy (10) is significant at the 5% level.

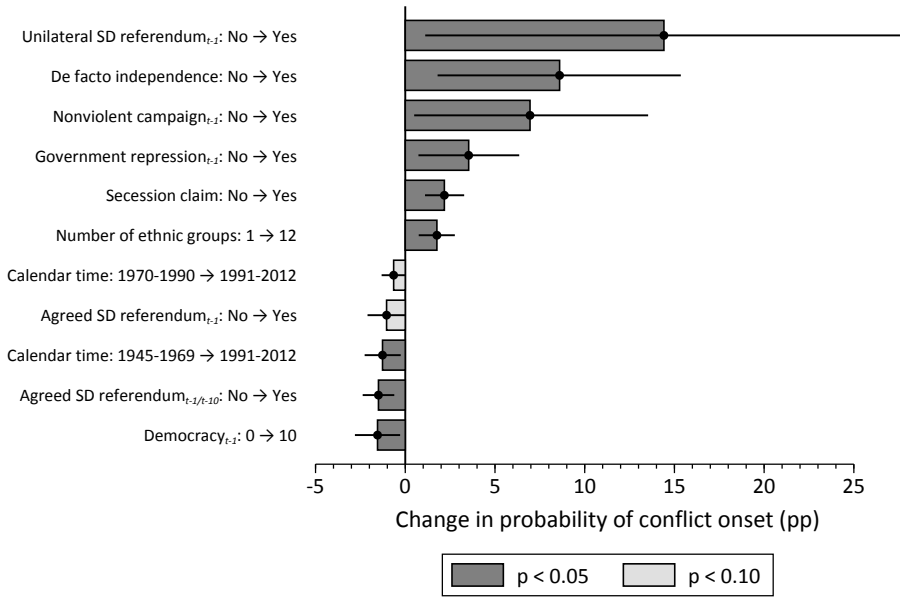
[18]The figure was generated with CLARIFY (King, Tomz & Wittenberg 2000). While Figure 7.1 shows the effect of democracy in model 1, the conclusion remains the same in model 2 (not shown).

Other control variables yield insignificant results or results that are inconsistent with existing theories. Self-rule concessions do not appear to affect the likelihood of conflict onset in a statistically significant way. A look at the cases suggests that a number of SDMs took up arms after major concessions in an effort to get yet better terms. The insurgencies by the Nagas and the Assamese in India constitute examples. Further, I find that neither the SD group's demographic size nor whether it is included into government matters for conflict onset. Especially the latter is surprising, given robust evidence that ethnic wars more generally become more likely if groups are excluded from state power (Wimmer, Cederman & Min 2009, Cederman, Wimmer & Min 2010, Cederman, Gleditsch & Buhaug 2013). There could be several reasons for this result, including the exclusive focus on European and Asian countries, measurement problems (in the case of separatist conflict, representation of actual separatists may matter more than general ethnic representation), post-treatment bias due to the accounting of possibly causally posterior variables such as self-rule concessions, and, of course, that government inclusion may simply matter less once mobilization for self-rule is ongoing.

Finally, to further evaluate the significance of the effects of SD referendums on conflict onset, Figure 7.2 compares effect sizes of statistically significant covariates while holding other covariates constant. For binary factors the figure shows the difference in the risk of conflict onset if the factor is absent or present. For ordinal and continuous factors the figure shows the difference between the tenth and the ninetieth percentile. Due to the nonlinear specification, for democracy the implications of a move from 0 to 10 on the democracy scale are shown. The corresponding change from -10 to 0 is not significant (see above) and thus not shown. All figures are based on model 1 in Table 7.5. In addition, the figure includes the long-term effect of agreed SD referendums on conflict onset as estimated in model 2. The amounts to which covariates are changed are given in brackets (low $\rightarrow$ high). The bars give the point estimates while the spikes give the 95% confidence intervals. The graph was generated with CLARIFY (King, Tomz & Wittenberg 2000).

It becomes evident that unilateral SD referendums represent an important driver of separatist armed conflict onset. The 14 percentage points increase in the risk of conflict onset in the year after a unilateral SD referendum clearly constitute the largest effect. For comparison, the second and third most important factors, de facto independence and nonviolent campaigns, lead to increases of 9 and 7 percentage points, respectively. Meanwhile, the peace-enhancing effect of agreed SD referendums turns out to be small by comparison. Agreed SD referendums

Figure 7.2: Substantive effects on the probability of conflict onset



in the previous year and the previous ten years decrease the probability of a conflict onset by 1 and 1.5 percentage points, respectively. Almost all covariates lead to more significant changes in the risk of conflict onset. Still, the effect of agreed SD referendums is comparable in size to the effects of the number of ethnic groups in a country, the difference between anocracies and democracies, and the difference between the time before and after the end of the Cold War. These are all important variables in the conflict literature. Thus, while relatively small, the effect of agreed SD referendums is not negligible.

7.4.2 Conflict Continuation

I now turn to the effect of SD referendums on conflict continuation. Again, I begin with a descriptive analysis. The unit of analysis is dispute-years at risk of conflict continuation (i.e. dispute-years that were in conflict in the previous year). The data covers all noncolonial SD disputes across the globe, 1945–2012. Table 7.6 shows the results. As noted already in chapter 5, violent conflict over SD is highly persistent. Out of a total of 2336 cases at risk of conflict continuation, conflict actually continued in 2159 cases, or 92% of cases.

My argument would suggest that conflict becomes less likely to continue after agreed SD referendums (H7.1) but more likely to continue after unilateral SD referendums, especially in the short term (H7.2). Table 7.6 lends these propositions initial support, though it has to be noted that the number of cases is small, especially in the case of agreed SD referendums. Analogously

Table 7.6: Probability of conflict continuation after agreed and unilateral SD referendums, 1945–2012

Scenario		**At risk**	**Conflict continuation**	**%**
Baseline		2336	2159	92.42
Agreed SD referendum at:	*t-1*	5	1	20
	t-2	1	1	100
	t-3	1	1	100
	t-4	1	1	100
	t-5	1	1	100
	t-6	1	1	100
	t-7	1	1	100
	t-8	1	1	100
	t-9	1	1	100
	t-10	1	1	100
Unilateral SD referendum at:	*t-1*	15	15	100
	t-2	20	13	65.00
	t-3	16	11	68.75
	t-4	11	10	90.91
	t-5	12	9	75.00
	t-6	9	8	88.89
	t-7	9	8	88.89
	t-8	9	9	100
	t-9	9	8	88.89
	t-10	9	7	77.78

to before, I consider conflict continuation probabilities up to ten years after referendums.[19] It turns out that separatist armed conflict almost always ends in the year after an agreed SD referendum. Out of a total of five agreed SD referendums held during an ongoing separatist armed conflict, conflict stopped in four cases in the next year. Examples include the referendums in Northern Ireland (1998) and East Timor (1999). Conflict continued in one case: after the 1979 autonomy referendum in the Basque Country. In this case, violence raged on for more than ten years after the referendum.

The picture is reversed for unilateral SD referendums. Conflict continued in all 15 cases with a unilateral SD referendum in the previous year. This provides initial evidence in favor of H7.1. Meanwhile, based on the descriptive statistics the effect appears limited to the short term. In the second up to the tenth year after unilateral SD referendums, the probability of conflict

[19]Note that the number of dispute-years at risk of conflict continuation after referendums changes over time. This is mainly because previously violent conflicts turn nonviolent while others become violent, thus entering the sample. Furthermore, some recent cases drop out because the sample extends only until and including 2012.

continuation hovers between 65% and 100%. On average, the risk of conflict continuation (80%) is even below the baseline risk of conflict continuation (92%). This finding is mainly driven by unilateral SD referendums in the context of several short conflicts in Eastern Europe in the early 1990s, including Bosnia and Moldova. As shown below the lower probability beyond the first year after unilateral SD referendums turns out not statistically significant when controlling for covariates.

Do the bivariate patterns hold if we control for confounders? Table 7.7 shows the results. Again, the focus shifts to SD disputes in European and Asian countries due to data availability. The unit of analysis remains dispute-years at risk of conflict continuation. Model 1 shows the effects of SD referendums in the previous year, whereas model 2 combines SD referendums in the previous ten years. This allows for an assessment of both the short- and long-term consequences of SD referendums. Both models are estimated with OLS. Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors clustered at the SD dispute level are reported in brackets. Positive coefficients indicate that conflict is more likely to continue and negative coefficients that conflict is more likely to end.

According to model 1, an agreed SD referendum implies a 60 percentage points reduction in the probability that conflict continues in the next year. The effect is highly statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) and notably holds while controlling for the major territorial reforms that often emanate from these referendums. This provides evidence in favor of H7.1, though it is worth reiterating that this finding is based on very few cases.[20]

The regression models also confirm that unilateral referendums increase the short-term risk of conflict continuation. In line with H7.2, model 1 suggests that a unilateral SD referendum makes it about 17 percentage points more likely that conflict continues in the next year ($p < 0.01$). This finding is based on a slightly higher number of referendums and thus somewhat more robust form a statistical perspective.[21]

Meanwhile, model 2 shows that the lower long-term risk of conflict continuation after unilateral SD referendums uncovered in the descriptive analysis turns out to be not statistically

[20] All five of the agreed SD referendums held during an ongoing separatist armed conflict were held in European and Asian countries and are thus included here, but it is still just five.

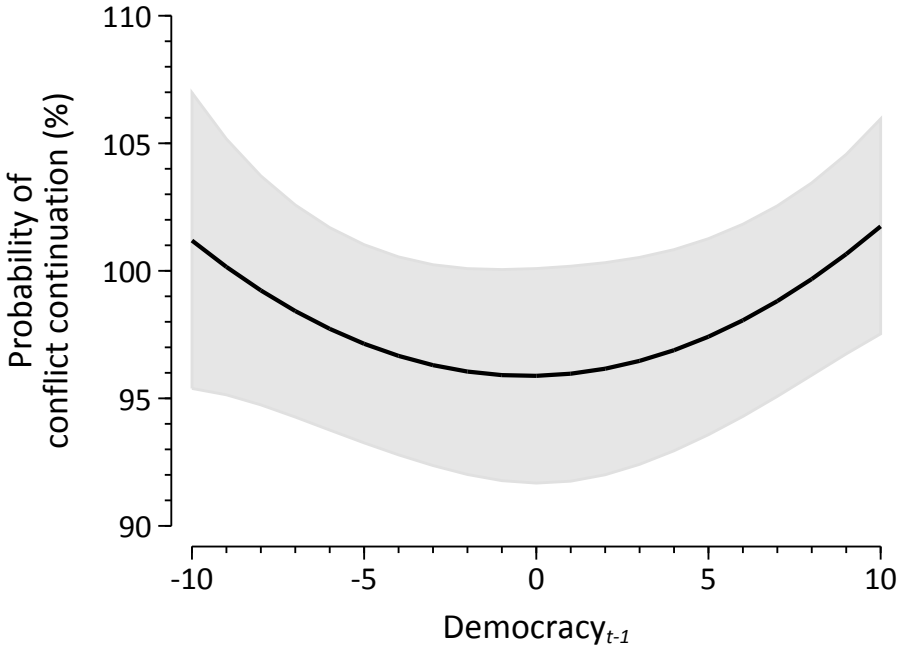
[21] 13 of the totally 15 unilateral SD referendums held during an ongoing separatist armed conflict were in Eurasian countries and are thus included in the regression models.

Table 7.7: Estimates of the effects of agreed and unilateral SD referendums on conflict continuation in European and Asian countries, 1945–2012

	(1)	(2)
SD referendums		
Agreed SD referendum$_{t\text{-}1}$	−0.602***	
	(0.207)	
Agreed SD referendum$_{t\text{-}1/t\text{-}10}$		−0.234
		(0.225)
Unilateral SD referendum$_{t\text{-}1}$	0.174***	
	(0.040)	
Unilateral SD referendum$_{t\text{-}1/t\text{-}10}$		−0.067
		(0.053)
Controls		
Democracy$_{t\text{-}1}$	0.000	0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Democracy$_{t\text{-}1}{}^2$	0.001	0.001
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Number of ethnic groups	0.004*	0.003
	(0.002)	(0.002)
ln(group size)	0.007	0.011*
	(0.006)	(0.006)
Government inclusion	−0.025	−0.022
	(0.025)	(0.025)
De facto independence	−0.028	−0.018
	(0.027)	(0.025)
Government repression$_{t\text{-}1}$	−0.015	−0.017
	(0.022)	(0.023)
Secession claim	0.036**	0.039**
	(0.016)	(0.017)
Nonviolent campaign$_{t\text{-}1}$	−0.079	−0.087
	(0.062)	(0.058)
Year = 1970-1990	0.011	0.016
	(0.017)	(0.018)
Year = 1991-2012	−0.037*	−0.032
	(0.021)	(0.020)
Self-rule concession$_{t\text{-}1}$	−0.153*	
	(0.078)	
Self-rule concession$_{t\text{-}1/t\text{-}10}$		−0.027
		(0.027)
Temporal dependence		
Conflict years	0.013***	0.013***
	(0.004)	(0.004)
Conflict years^2	−0.000***	−0.000***
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Conflict years^3	0.000**	0.000**
	(0.000)	(0.000)
R^2	0.086	0.063
N	1501	1501

Note: Both models estimated with OLS. Estimates for the constant not shown. Two-tailed heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors clustered at the SD dispute level in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure 7.3: Effect of democracy on conflict continuation



significant when controlling for confounders.[22] Further, model 2 suggests that contrary to H7.1 also agreed SD referendums do not have a long-term effect on the probability of conflict continuation, though this is finding is notably driven by a single referendum (see above).

Regarding the control variables, models 1 and 2 confirm expectations that conflicts last longer if SDMs claim outright secession but often end when the state makes major concessions related to self-rule. There is also weak evidence that conflicts are more likely to continue if SD groups are large and if there are many ethnic groups in a country. Further, there are some indications that conflicts have become shorter since the end of the Cold War. Government inclusion and nonviolent campaigns show the expected signs but fail to reach statistical significance. Both de facto independence and government repression (measured in terms of curtailments of group rights) clearly have no statistically distinguishable effect on conflict continuation, possibly because the countervailing mechanisms identified in existing work cancel each other out on the aggregate. Finally, in partial agreement with contentions that democracies find it harder to ruthlessly suppress a rebellion, Figure 7.3 suggests that conflicts tend to be short in anocracies

[22]Model 2 looks at unilateral SD referendum incidences in the previous ten years, thus including the first year after unilateral referendums, where the probability of conflict continuation is increased. The conclusion remains the same when unilateral SD referendum incidences in the previous year are dropped and only unilateral SD referendum incidences in the second up to the tenth previous year are considered (not shown).

and longer in both democracies and autocracies.[23] However, the confidence interval is very wide and further analyses suggest that changes on the democracy scale are never statistically significant.[24]

Figure 7.4 compares the substantive effects of statistically significant covariates. As above, the figure shows the risk difference when moving binary factors from 0 to 1 and ordinal and continuous factors from the tenth to the ninetieth percentile while holding other variables constant.[25] All figures are based on model 1 in Table 7.7. The short-term effect of agreed SD referendums on conflict continuation turns out to be the largest effect. The 60 percentage point reduction implied by an agreed SD referendum in the previous year is almost four times as much as the 15.5 percentage point reduction resulting from major territorial reforms, such as the installment of an autonomy regime. However, note the large confidence interval stretching from below minus 20 percentage points to about minus 100 percentage points, reflecting the low number of cases on which this finding is based. The 17 percentage point increase in the probability of conflict continuation triggered by a unilateral referendum in the previous year also turns out to be substantively important. All covariates other than SD referendums and self-rule concessions have much weaker effects.

7.5 Sensitivity Analysis

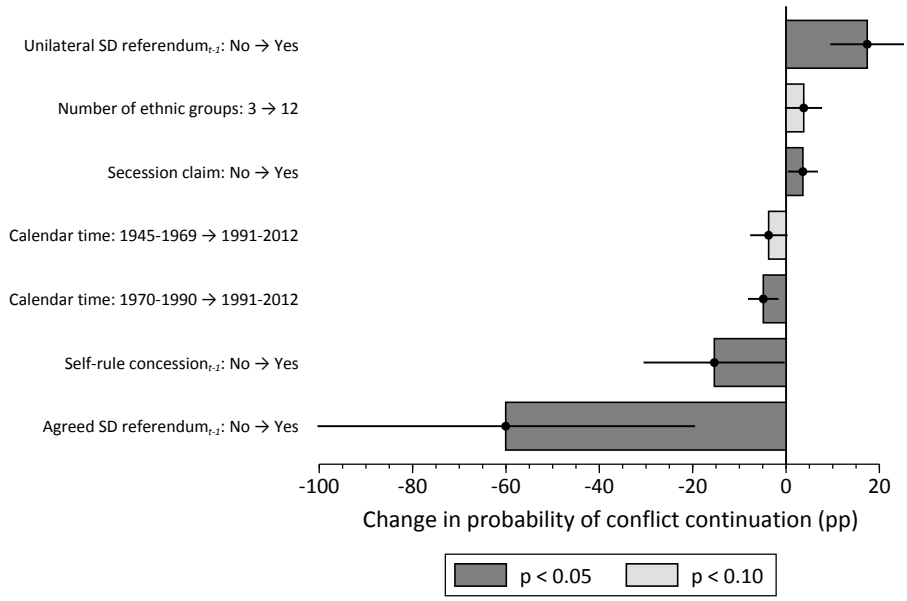
I now proceed to an evaluation of the robustness of the findings. Overall, the sensitivity analysis suggests that most of the effects found in the main section are reasonably robust. An exception emerges for the short-term effect of agreed SD referendums on conflict onset, which was only weakly statistically significant to begin with and ends up above the 10% level of statistical significance in certain specifications. Furthermore, agreed SD referendums' long-term effect on conflict onset, while robust across a high number of specifications, turns out comparatively fragile to hidden bias. Readers who are not interested in technical details may be satisfied with this short summary and thus want to move directly to the conclusion.

[23] While Figure 7.3 shows the effect of democracy in model 1, the conclusion remains the same in model 2 (not shown). Again, the figure was generated with CLARIFY (King, Tomz & Wittenberg 2000).

[24] Dropping democracy squared and considering only the linear term also yields a nonsignificant result.

[25] For democracy I estimated the implied changes when moving from an autocracy to an anocracy (-10 to 0 on the democracy scale) as well as when moving from an anocracy to a democracy (0 to 10), but as discussed above these effects turned out not significant and are thus not shown.

Figure 7.4: Substantive effects on the probability of conflict continuation



The sensitivity analysis proceeds in several steps. In this order, I check the robustness of the findings to a log-linear estimator, to alternative measurement choices, to the addition of further control variables, and to SD dispute fixed effects. Finally, to probe the plausibility of the selection on observables assumption, I conduct a formal sensitivity analysis.

7.5.1 Logit

In a first-step, I re-estimate all models with a log-linear estimator designed for binary dependent variables: logit regression. As discussed in the data and methods section, logit regression does not yield valid estimates for the effect of agreed SD referendums on conflict onset and the short-term effect of unilateral SD referendums on conflict continuation due to quasicomplete separation. It is due to this that all models were estimated with OLS in the main section. However, logit parameter estimates tend to be more accurate than OLS estimates for variables that are not affected by separation issues. Reassuringly, Table 7.8 shows that the logit results are highly similar to the OLS results reported above, with the exception of estimates that are not interpretable due to quasicomplete separation (in italics). Unilateral SD referendums continue to significantly increase the short-term risk of conflict onset (model 1) while having no significant long-term effect on conflict onset (model 2) and conflict continuation (model 4). Agreed SD referendums continue to significantly decrease the risk of conflict continuation in the short-term (model 3). A small difference to the LPMs reported above emerges as the long-term

Table 7.8: Logit estimates

	(1) Onset	(2) Onset	(3) Cont.	(4) Cont.
SD referendums				
Agreed SD referendum$_{t\text{-}1}$	*−10.522****		−3.117**	
	(*0.346*)		(1.517)	
Agreed SD referendum$_{t\text{-}1/t\text{-}10}$		*−13.833****		−2.115*
		(*0.812*)		(1.216)
Unilateral SD referendum$_{t\text{-}1}$	1.614**		*14.894****	
	(0.634)		(*0.653*)	
Unilateral SD referendum$_{t\text{-}1/t\text{-}10}$		0.439		−0.662
		(0.409)		(0.402)
Controls				
Democracy$_{t\text{-}1}$	0.001	−0.002	0.003	0.017
	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.021)
Democracy$_{t\text{-}1}{}^2$	−0.013***	−0.012***	0.007	0.008
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.007)
Number of ethnic groups	0.115***	0.107***	0.075**	0.070*
	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.035)	(0.038)
ln(group size)	0.067	0.056	0.119	0.191**
	(0.058)	(0.059)	(0.089)	(0.092)
Government inclusion	−0.138	−0.082	−0.368	−0.372
	(0.331)	(0.328)	(0.365)	(0.370)
De facto independence	1.449***	1.416***	−0.310	−0.082
	(0.387)	(0.412)	(0.432)	(0.435)
Government repression$_{t\text{-}1}$	1.045***	1.129***	−0.145	−0.187
	(0.304)	(0.298)	(0.299)	(0.301)
Secession claim	1.125***	1.116***	0.584**	0.664***
	(0.230)	(0.229)	(0.241)	(0.241)
Nonviolent campaign$_{t\text{-}1}$	1.027**	1.272**	−1.101**	−1.088***
	(0.481)	(0.555)	(0.481)	(0.421)
Year = 1970-1990	−0.365	−0.364	0.469	0.466
	(0.269)	(0.269)	(0.328)	(0.354)
Year = 1991-2012	−0.813***	−0.789***	−0.470	−0.469
	(0.268)	(0.270)	(0.296)	(0.304)
Self-rule concession$_{t\text{-}1}$	−0.061		−1.551***	
	(0.589)		(0.532)	
Self-rule concession$_{t\text{-}1/t\text{-}10}$		0.059		−0.553
		(0.306)		(0.345)
Temporal dependence				
Peace/conflict years	−0.060*	−0.067*	0.196***	0.191***
	(0.034)	(0.036)	(0.056)	(0.056)
Peace/conflict years^2	0.001	0.002	−0.006**	−0.006**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Peace/conflict years^3	−0.000	−0.000	0.000*	0.000*
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Pseudo R^2	0.165	0.164	0.131	0.116
N	7107	7107	1501	1501

Note: Estimates in italics suffer from quasicomplete separation. Estimates for the constant not shown. Two-tailed standard errors clustered at the SD dispute level in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

effect agreed SD referendums on conflict continuation (model 4) is now weakly significant.[26]

[26]Note that this finding is driven solely by events immediately after agreed referendums (see Table 7.6 above).

7.5.2 Alternative Measurement Choices

In a second step, I assess whether the results are robust to a number of different measurement choices. First, I evaluate to what extent results change with an alternatively defined version of the dependent variable. The conflict variable used in the main section includes some conflicts with mixed motives: conflicts that were not only fought over SD but where rebels also aimed at reforming or capturing the central government. Examples include the Uzbek and the Tajik insurgencies in Afghanistan. Further, the separatist armed conflict variable used above includes some "short peaces": cases where two episodes of armed conflict were separated by only one or two years. For example, the two Chechen Wars in 1994–1996 and 1999–2012 were separated by only two calendar years. Whether conflicts emerging after short peaces should be considered new wars or part of the same old wars is debatable, and existing work has taken different approaches (Sambanis 2004). Models 1–4 in Table 7.9 reestimate the main models reported above while dropping both ambiguous conflicts and new onsets after short peaces. The conclusion remains the same, with one exception. The short-term effect of agreed SD referendums decreases somewhat in size (from minus 1 point to minus 0.7 points) and now fails the 10% level of statistical significance ($p = 0.13$).

Second, I consider alternative definitions of the main independent variables. As discussed in previous chapters, in two cases referendums had implications for more than one SD dispute and were thus assigned to multiple state-SDM dyads. Both represent unilateral SD referendums initiated by the state: the 1991 all-union referendum in the Soviet Union and the 1993 unity referendum in Karachay-Cherkessia (see chapters 4 and 5 for more details). Models 5 and 6 in Table 7.9 show the results if the conflict onset models are re-estimated without these cases. The conclusion remains the same. I do not re-estimate the conflict continuation models because both referendums were held during peace and did not lead to a conflict onset; thus the conflict continuation models are not affected.

Third, I consider alternative time frames for the effects of SD referendums on conflict onset and continuation. The main models reported above used a one-year lag to test the short-term effects of referendums. Now I use dummies that consider referendums in the two previous years. Further, the main models used dummies that consider referendums in the previous ten years to evaluate SD referendums' long-term implications. Now I use dummies that consider referendum

Table 7.9: Alternative measurement choices

	(1) Onset	(2) Onset	(3) Cont.	(4) Cont.	(5) Onset	(6) Onset	(7) Onset	(8) Onset	(9) Cont.	(10) Cont.	(11) Onset	(12) Onset	(13) Cont.	(14) Cont.	(15) Onset	(16) Onset	(17) Cont.	(18) Cont.
SD referendums																		
Agreed SD referendum$_{t-1}$	−0.007		−0.624***		−0.011**										−0.010*		−0.588***	
	(0.005)		(0.205)		(0.005)										(0.006)		(0.215)	
Agreed SD referendum$_{t-1/t-10}$		−0.013***		−0.235		−0.015***										−0.014***		−0.270
		(0.004)		(0.231)		(0.005)										(0.004)		(0.226)
Unilateral SD referendum$_{t-1}$	0.142**		0.153***		0.153**										0.139**		0.189***	
	(0.068)		(0.038)		(0.072)										(0.066)		(0.037)	
Unilateral SD referendum$_{t-1/t-10}$		0.014		−0.067		0.014										0.011		−0.067
		(0.012)		(0.059)		(0.014)										(0.013)		(0.058)
SD referendums (alt. time frames)																		
Agreed SD referendum$_{t-1/t-2}$							−0.010**		−0.512*									
							(0.005)		(0.266)									
Agreed SD referendum$_{t-1/t-n}$								−0.012***		−0.268								
								(0.003)		(0.162)								
Unilateral SD referendum$_{t-1/t-2}$							0.107**		−0.006									
							(0.046)		(0.073)									
Unilateral SD referendum$_{t-1/t-n}$								−0.002		−0.071*								
								(0.012)		(0.038)								
SD referendums (sub-types separated)																		
Ratification referendum$_{t-1}$											−0.010		−0.568**					
											(0.009)		(0.252)					
Ratification referendum$_{t-1/t-10}$												−0.016**		−0.165				
												(0.007)		(0.220)				
Arbitration referendum$_{t-1}$											−0.011***		−0.758***					
											(0.004)		(0.097)					
Arbitration referendum$_{t-1/t-10}$												−0.009**		−0.893***				
												(0.004)		(0.063)				
Separatist-sponsored referendum$_{t-1}$											0.146*		0.187***					
											(0.077)		(0.046)					
Separatist-sponsored referendum$_{t-1/t-10}$												0.008		−0.174**				
												(0.015)		(0.080)				
State-sponsored referendum$_{t-1}$											0.074		0.142**					
											(0.127)		(0.069)					
State-sponsored referendum$_{t-1/t-10}$												0.017		0.016				
												(0.022)		(0.052)				
Controls																		
Democracy$_{t-1}$	−0.000	−0.000	0.001	0.002	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000	0.001	0.001	−0.000	−0.000	0.000	0.001				
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)				
Democracy$_{t-1}^2$	−0.000	−0.000	0.000	0.000	−0.000*	−0.000*	−0.000*	−0.000*	0.001	0.001**	−0.000*	−0.000*	0.001	0.000				
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)				
Electoral democracy (V-Dem)$_{t-1}$															−0.030	−0.034	−0.325**	−0.283**
															(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.144)	(0.140)
Electoral democracy (V-Dem)$_{t-1}^2$															0.006	0.011	0.414***	0.410***
															(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.150)	(0.147)
Number of ethnic groups	0.002***	0.002***	0.004	0.003	0.002***	0.002***	0.002***	0.002***	0.004*	0.002	0.002***	0.002***	0.004*	0.004*	0.001***	0.001***	0.006***	0.005**
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.002)	(0.002)
ln(group size)	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.006	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.009	0.011**	0.000	0.000	0.007	0.010*	0.000	0.000	0.010*	0.014**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Government inclusion	−0.002	−0.001	−0.022	−0.016	0.000	0.001	−0.000	0.001	−0.026	−0.018	0.000	0.001	−0.025	−0.023	0.001	0.002	−0.042	−0.042
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.030)	(0.030)
De facto independence	0.060**	0.062**	−0.011	−0.002	0.086**	0.089**	0.084**	0.094***	−0.023	−0.016	0.085**	0.090**	−0.029	−0.002	0.086**	0.090**	−0.027	−0.017
	(0.028)	(0.030)	(0.027)	(0.025)	(0.034)	(0.036)	(0.035)	(0.036)	(0.026)	(0.024)	(0.034)	(0.036)	(0.027)	(0.023)	(0.035)	(0.037)	(0.027)	(0.026)
Government repression$_{t-1}$	0.038***	0.040***	−0.010	−0.012	0.035**	0.038***	0.034**	0.037***	−0.015	−0.016	0.036**	0.037***	−0.015	−0.017	0.034**	0.037***	−0.013	−0.015
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.022)	(0.022)
Secession claim	0.020***	0.020***	0.043**	0.046**	0.022***	0.021***	0.022***	0.022***	0.037**	0.039*	0.022***	0.022***	0.035**	0.045***	0.020***	0.020***	0.041**	0.046**
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.017)	(0.018)
Nonviolent campaign$_{t-1}$	0.063**	0.071**	−0.055	−0.066	0.069**	0.077**	0.070**	0.078**	−0.077	−0.088	0.069**	0.078**	−0.074	−0.059	0.071**	0.079**	−0.078	−0.086
	(0.031)	(0.033)	(0.057)	(0.054)	(0.033)	(0.035)	(0.033)	(0.035)	(0.061)	(0.058)	(0.033)	(0.035)	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.033)	(0.035)	(0.065)	(0.060)
Year = 1970-1990	−0.005	−0.005	0.018	0.023	−0.006	−0.006	−0.006	−0.006	0.014	0.022	−0.006	−0.006	0.011	0.006	−0.004	−0.004	0.008	0.008
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.017)	(0.018)
Year = 1991-2012	−0.013**	−0.013**	−0.029	−0.023	−0.013**	−0.012**	−0.013**	−0.011**	−0.033*	−0.027	−0.013**	−0.012**	−0.038*	−0.031	−0.009*	−0.009*	−0.053**	−0.055**
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.022)	(0.022)
Self-rule concession$_{t-1}$	−0.004		−0.134*		−0.000						−0.001		−0.149*		0.000		−0.223***	
	(0.010)		(0.076)		(0.012)						(0.012)		(0.082)		(0.012)		(0.075)	
Self-rule concession$_{t-1/t-10}$		−0.002		−0.020		−0.001						−0.000		−0.035		0.000		−0.044*
		(0.004)		(0.029)		(0.005)						(0.005)		(0.028)		(0.005)		(0.025)
Self-rule concession$_{t-1/t-2}$							−0.008		−0.098*									
							(0.008)		(0.056)									
Self-rule concession$_{t-1/t-n}$								0.003		−0.003								
								(0.003)		(0.019)								
Temporal dependence																		
Peace/conflict years	−0.000	−0.000	0.010**	0.010**	−0.001*	−0.001**	−0.001*	−0.001**	0.013***	0.014***	−0.001*	−0.001**	0.013***	0.012***	−0.001*	−0.001**	0.012***	0.012***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Peace/conflict years^2	0.000	0.000	−0.000**	−0.000**	0.000*	0.000**	0.000*	0.000**	−0.000**	−0.000***	0.000*	0.000**	−0.000***	−0.000**	0.000*	0.000**	−0.000**	−0.000**
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Peace/conflict years^3	−0.000	−0.000	0.000*	0.000*	−0.000**	−0.000**	−0.000**	−0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	−0.000**	−0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	−0.000**	−0.000**	0.000*	0.000**
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
R^2	0.038	0.033	0.076	0.051	0.046	0.040	0.045	0.040	0.076	0.066	0.045	0.040	0.086	0.076	0.045	0.040	0.103	0.073
N	7082	7082	1374	1374	7105	7087	7107	7107	1501	1501	7107	7107	1501	1501	7159	7159	1523	1523

Note: All models estimated with OLS. Estimates for the constant not shown. Two-tailed heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors clustered at the SD dispute level in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

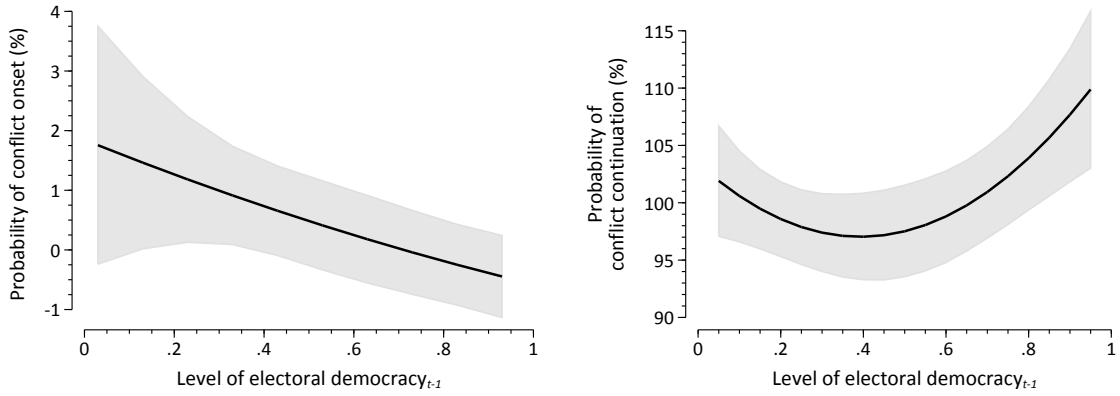
events in any previous year.[27] Models 7–10 in Table 7.9 show that the results are consistent with the results reported in the main section. The most significant difference emerges with regard to the effect of unilateral SD referendums on conflict continuation. Model 9 shows that a unilateral SD referendum in one of the two previous years does not significantly affect the probability of conflict continuation. Thus, unilateral SD referendums make conflicts more likely to continue in the next year but not beyond that. Further, model 10 shows that a unilateral SD referendum incidence in any previous year leads to a weakly significant decrease in the probability of conflict continuation. This result is driven by several separatist-sponsored unilateral referendums in the context of relatively short wars in Eastern Europe, including the conflicts involving the Gagauz and Transnistria in Moldova. Case study evidence suggests that these conflicts were short for reasons other than the referendums (Kalyvas & Balcells 2010). Note that a dummy that is coded with 1 after a certain point during a conflict is likely to yield negative estimates because wars have to end at some point.

Next, I re-estimate the main models while separating the different sub-types of agreed and unilateral SD referendums. This serves two purposes. On the one hand, this checks the implicit assumption that the different types of agreed and unilateral SD referendums affect conflict onset and continuation in the same way. On the other hand, it improves causal identification. Some control variables have been shown to differentially affect the different sub-types of agreed and unilateral SD referendums (see chapter 6). For example, de facto independence positively correlates with separatist-sponsored referendums but negatively with state-sponsored referendums. The problem is unlikely to be severe as most differences are due to varying levels of statistical significance while the direction of the effects is the same. Nevertheless, separating the sub-types of agreed and unilateral SD referendums should improve causal identification as it allows to adjust for the varying effects of some control variables on different sub-types of referendums. Reassuringly, models 11-14 in Table 7.9 show that the substantive conclusions remain similar, though parameter variability increases. Most notably, the short-term effects of ratification and state-sponsored referendums on conflict onset are not significant at standard levels (see model 11). However, the direction of the effects remains the same and their size similar, suggesting that the lack of statistical significance may be owed to the smaller number of cases.[28]

[27] As in previous models, I use the same time frames for self-rule concessions so as to make the effects of agreed SD referendums independent of the territorial reforms they often trigger.

[28] Further, model 14 suggests a significant negative correlation of separatist-sponsored referendums with conflict

Figure 7.5: Effects of electoral democracy (V-Dem) on conflict onset and continuation



(a) Onset (model 15 in Table 7.9)

(b) Continuation (model 17 in Table 7.9)

Finally, I replace the polity2 scale with an alternative measure for democracy: the electoral democracy index from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project (Coppedge et al. 2015, Teorell et al. 2016). Vreeland (2008) argues that polity2 is problematic in statistical analyses of violent conflict because certain components of the polity2 index are defined with explicit reference to political violence, which may bias results. The V-Dem electoral democracy index combines expert ratings on a total of five components of electoral democracy derived from Dahl's ((1971), (1989), (1998)) influential polyarchy conceptualization: elected officials, free and fair elections, freedom of expression, associational autonomy, and inclusive citizenship. Contrary to polity2, political violence is not part of the definition of any of the five components. The resulting index ranges from 0 to 1, though both 0 and 1 are theoretical values that in practice are never reached. Models 15–18 in Table 7.9 show that the conclusions regarding the effects of agreed and unilateral SD referendums remain unchanged if the V-Dem measure is used instead of polity2.

As a side note, the V-Dem measure leads to different conclusions regarding the effect of democracy on conflict onset (see Figure 7.5). While polity2 suggested that separatist conflicts are most likely to break out in anocracies, the V-Dem measure suggests that increasing levels of democracy decrease the probability of conflict onset more or less linearly. This provides evidence in favor of Vreeland's (2008) argument that existing evidence in favor of the murder-in-the-middle hypothesis may be driven by polity2's partial definition of a democracy in terms

continuation. A similar finding emerged in model 10. See the above paragraph for a short discussion of possible reasons for this result.

of the absence of political violence. Meanwhile, the V-Dem and the polity2 measures lead to similar conclusions regarding the effect of democracy on conflict continuation.

7.5.3 Additional Covariates

The crucial assumption underlying causal estimates based on regression analysis is selection on observables, or no omitted variable bias. While it is impossible to directly test the selection on observables assumption, one way to evaluate its plausibility is to add further variables that may be related with SD referendums and conflict onset and continuation and see whether the results remain stable. This is what I do next.

First, I add measures for whether the state in question has a federal structure; for whether the territory that is claimed by an SDM contains hydrocarbons (oil or gas); for whether the SD group is spatially concentrated; for whether the SD group has ethnic kin; and for whether it commands over a meaningful level of regional self-rule.[29] These variables have all been argued to affect conflict onset, continuation, or both.[30] Further, as discussed in the robustness section in chapter 6, all five variables may be related with SD referendums for theoretical reasons, even though the empirical links tended to be weak.[31] However, even confounders that are only weakly correlated with the treatment can sometimes bias results. Reassuringly, models 1–4 in Table 7.10 shows that all results remain stable if these five variables are added. Meanwhile, note that contrary to existing arguments, none of the added variables has a statistically significant relationship with conflict onset or continuation.

Second, I add measures for whether the country in question has legal provisions for mandatory referendums, legal provisions for citizen's initiatives, and for the number of previously held SD referendums in nearby countries. Chapter 6 showed that these variables influence SD referendum occurrences to varying extents. There is no obvious reason why they should be related to conflict onset or continuation, but we nevertheless want to make sure that results remain

[29]The measure for federal states is derived from Roeder (2009). All other measures are culled from the SDM-Eurasia dataset.

[30]For a possible linkage between federal structures and civil war see e.g. Cunningham (2014); for hydrocarbons see e.g. Ross (2006); for spatial concentration see e.g. Toft (2003); for ethnic kin see e.g. Gleditsch (2007); and for regional autonomy see e.g. (Bunce 1999, Brancati 2006).

[31]The robustness section in chapter 6 tested two additional variables as potential determinants of SD referendums: the existence of a precedent of an SD referendum in a country and legal provisions for government-initiated referendums. Both yielded relatively weak results and neither has a clear theoretical relationship with separatist armed conflict. Additional tests confirmed that the conclusions remain similar if these two variables are added to the specification (not shown).

Table 7.10: Additional control variables

	(1) Onset	(2) Onset	(3) Cont.	(4) Cont.	(5) Onset	(6) Onset	(7) Cont.	(8) Cont.	(9) Onset	(10) Onset	(11) Cont.	(12) Cont.	(13) Onset	(14) Onset	(15) Onset	(16) Onset	(17) Cont.	(18) Cont.
SD referendums																		
Agreed SD referendum$_{t-1}$	−0.010*		−0.618***		−0.008		−0.585***		−0.005		−0.578***		−0.010*		−0.012**		−0.603***	
	(0.005)		(0.211)		(0.006)		(0.213)		(0.006)		(0.213)		(0.005)		(0.006)		(0.207)	
Agreed SD referendum$_{t-1/t-10}$		−0.015***		−0.247		−0.010**		−0.224		−0.011**		−0.212		−0.015***		−0.015***		−0.235
		(0.005)		(0.224)		(0.005)		(0.234)		(0.005)		(0.235)		(0.005)		(0.004)		(0.224)
Unilateral SD referendum$_{t-1}$	0.144**		0.176***		0.146**		0.191***		0.145**		0.180***		0.144**		0.134**		0.167***	
	(0.068)		(0.042)		(0.068)		(0.043)		(0.068)		(0.042)		(0.068)		(0.067)		(0.046)	
Unilateral SD referendum$_{t-1/t-10}$		0.011		−0.067		0.016		−0.053		0.010		−0.061		0.011		0.011		−0.072
		(0.013)		(0.054)		(0.013)		(0.048)		(0.013)		(0.053)		(0.013)		(0.013)		(0.055)
Controls																		
Democracy$_{t-1}$	−0.000	−0.000	0.000	0.001	−0.000	−0.000	0.001	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.001	0.000	0.000	−0.000	−0.000	0.000	0.001
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Democracy$_{t-1}{}^2$	−0.000*	−0.000*	0.001	0.001*	−0.000**	−0.000**	0.001	0.001	−0.000	−0.000	0.001	0.001	−0.000**	−0.000**	−0.000*	−0.000	0.001	0.001*
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Number of ethnic groups	0.001***	0.001***	0.004	0.003	0.000	0.000	0.003	0.003	−0.000	−0.000	0.003	0.002	0.002***	0.002***	0.002***	0.002***	0.004*	0.003
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.002)	(0.002)
ln(group size)	0.000	0.000	0.008	0.012**	−0.000	−0.000	0.007	0.011**	−0.000	−0.000	0.007	0.011*	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.007	0.011*
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Government inclusion	0.001	0.001	−0.020	−0.020	0.003	0.003	−0.029	−0.023	0.001	0.002	−0.028	−0.025	0.001	0.001	−0.000	0.000	−0.025	−0.022
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.025)	(0.025)
De facto independence	0.084**	0.086**	−0.016	−0.011	0.083**	0.085**	−0.029	−0.020	0.080**	0.084**	−0.033	−0.022	0.083**	0.087**	0.084**	0.087**	−0.029	−0.021
	(0.035)	(0.037)	(0.035)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.038)	(0.027)	(0.025)	(0.034)	(0.036)	(0.027)	(0.025)	(0.035)	(0.036)	(0.034)	(0.036)	(0.027)	(0.026)
Government repression$_{t-1}$	0.035**	0.037***	−0.013	−0.016	0.037***	0.039***	−0.013	−0.014	0.034**	0.037***	−0.017	−0.018	0.035**	0.037***	0.035**	0.037***	−0.015	−0.020
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.022)	(0.023)
Secession claim	0.022***	0.022***	0.040**	0.040**	0.020***	0.020***	0.041**	0.043**	0.019***	0.019***	0.038**	0.041**	0.021***	0.021***	0.021***	0.021***	0.035**	0.038**
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.016)	(0.017)
Nonviolent campaign$_{t-1}$	0.069**	0.077**	−0.080	−0.092	0.076**	0.083**	−0.064	−0.073	0.081**	0.089***	−0.062	−0.073	0.067**	0.076**	0.063*	0.067*	−0.080	−0.092
	(0.034)	(0.035)	(0.064)	(0.060)	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.057)	(0.053)	(0.032)	(0.034)	(0.057)	(0.053)	(0.034)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.037)	(0.061)	(0.058)
Year = 1970-1990	−0.006	−0.005	0.009	0.013	−0.002	−0.002	0.010	0.013	0.006	0.006	0.026	0.027	−0.006	−0.006	−0.006	−0.006	0.011	0.016
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.017)	(0.019)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.017)	(0.018)
Year = 1991-2012	−0.013**	−0.012**	−0.039*	−0.038*	−0.002	−0.002	−0.028	−0.026	0.002	0.003	−0.015	−0.014	−0.013***	−0.013**	−0.013**	−0.013**	−0.038*	−0.033
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.024)	(0.023)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.021)	(0.020)
Self-rule concession$_{t-1}$	−0.002		−0.146*		−0.001		−0.156**		−0.002		−0.153*		−0.001		−0.001		−0.152*	
	(0.012)		(0.076)		(0.012)		(0.078)		(0.012)		(0.078)		(0.012)		(0.012)		(0.078)	
Self-rule concession$_{t-1/t-10}$		−0.003		−0.025		−0.001		−0.028		−0.003		−0.027		−0.001		−0.000		−0.027
		(0.006)		(0.028)		(0.005)		(0.027)		(0.005)		(0.027)		(0.005)		(0.005)		(0.027)
Additional controls																		
Federal state$_{t-1}$	−0.000	−0.001	0.007	0.001														
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.029)	(0.028)														
Spatial concentration	0.001	0.001	−0.020	−0.013														
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.015)	(0.015)														
Ethnic kin	0.004	0.004	−0.011	−0.006														
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.016)	(0.016)														
Regional autonomy	0.003	0.004	−0.014	−0.005														
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.020)	(0.022)														
Hydrocarbon reserves	0.001	0.001	0.011	0.021														
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.017)	(0.017)														
Mandatory referendum provisions$_{t-1}$					−0.003	−0.002	0.016	0.019										
					(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.025)	(0.026)										
Citizen's initiative provisions$_{t-1}$					−0.001	−0.002	−0.058	−0.037										
					(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.062)	(0.066)										
Number of nearby SD referendums					−0.000***	−0.000***	−0.001	−0.001										
					(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)										
ln(GDP per capita$_{t-1}$)									−0.014***	−0.014***	−0.019	−0.015						
									(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.012)	(0.012)						
Number of previous armed conflicts													0.004	0.003				
													(0.003)	(0.003)				
Sovereignty declaration$_{t-1}$															0.036	0.047*	0.016	0.065
															(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.054)	(0.055)
Temporal dependence																		
Peace/conflict years	−0.001**	−0.001**	0.013***	0.013***	−0.001**	−0.001**	0.012***	0.012***	−0.001**	−0.001**	0.014***	0.013***	−0.001*	−0.001**	−0.001*	−0.001*	0.013***	0.013***
	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Peace/conflict years^2	0.000*	0.000*	−0.000**	−0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	−0.000**	−0.000***	0.000**	0.000**	−0.000***	−0.000***	0.000*	0.000**	0.000*	0.000*	−0.000***	−0.000***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Peace/conflict years^3	−0.000**	−0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	−0.000**	−0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	−0.000**	−0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	−0.000**	−0.000**	−0.000*	−0.000*	0.000**	0.000**
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
R^2	0.046	0.040	0.088	0.064	0.050	0.045	0.092	0.067	0.053	0.048	0.089	0.065	0.046	0.040	0.046	0.042	0.086	0.064
N	7107	7107	1501	1501	7107	7107	1501	1501	7106	7106	1496	1496	7107	7107	7107	7107	1501	1501

Note: All models estimated with OLS. Estimates for the constant not shown. Two-tailed heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors clustered at the SD dispute level in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

stable if these factors are included. Models 5–8 in Table 7.10 show the results. Surprisingly, it turns out that conflict onsets are significantly less likely to occur if there have been many SD referendums in nearby countries in the past. The reason is probably that this variable picks up some liberal democracy bias that is missed by the polity2 variable (there have been many SD referendums in Western Europe but few conflict onsets). By contrast, in line with expectations provisions for mandatory referendums and citizen's initiatives do not significantly influence conflict onset and conflict continuation, and the number of nearby SD referendums also does not significantly affect conflict continuation. More importantly, the short-term effect of agreed SD referendums on conflict onset decreases from minus 1 point to minus 0.7 points and is no longer statistically significant (see model 5). This suggests that the (weakly significant) effect reported in the main section may be affected by some liberal democracy bias. However, an additional reason may lie in the combination of few cases and small effect size, which makes it difficult to find significant effects. Evidence in this direction comes from the fact that the long-term effect of agreed SD referendums, which considers more years after the referendums (and hence more cases), remains significant at $p < 0.05$, even though it also decreases somewhat in size (from minus 1.5 points to minus 1 point). All other estimates remain similar to the main results reported above.

Third, I add the natural logarithm of a country's gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in constant 2005 dollars, lagged one year.[32] (Logged) GDP per capita has been identified as one of the most robust correlates of civil war onset in country-level studies (Hegre & Sambanis 2006), and is also often argued to affect the duration of civil wars (Cunningham, Gleditsch & Salehyan 2009, Wucherpfennig et al. 2012).[33] GDP per capita does not have an obvious relationship with agreed or unilateral SD referendums, but similarly to the number of nearby SD referendums it may pick up some liberal democracy bias that is missed by the other covariates. Models 9–12 in Table 7.10 show the results. In line with previous research, GDP per capita correlates negatively with both conflict onset and continuation, though it is significant only in the onset

[32]My main source for data on GDP per capita is Gleditsch (2002). I imputed missing values using real GDP growth statistics from the World Bank's World Development Indicators (WDI) (The World Bank 2015), Angus Maddison's Historical Statistics of the World Economy (Maddison 2010) including the updates in the The Maddison-Project (2013), and Sambanis & Schulhofer-Wohl (2015).

[33]Note that it is not clear why GDP per capita affects civil war. GDP per capita can be seen as a proxy for the economic opportunity costs to rebel (Collier & Hoeffler 2004), but also as a proxy for state capacity (Fearon & Laitin 2003) or as a proxy for economic grievances (Cederman, Wimmer & Min 2010), and is therefore linked to civil war via several plausible causal mechanisms.

models. More importantly, the short-term effect of agreed SD referendums on conflict onset once more decreases somewhat in size and turns insignificant, whereas the long-term effect of agreed SD referendums also decreases somewhat in size but remains significant at $p < 0.05$. This provides additional evidence that inferences regarding the effect of agreed SD referendums are affected by some liberal democracy bias.

Fourth, I add a count of the number of previous spells of violent armed conflict between SD groups and the state to the conflict onset models. A history of armed conflict has been argued to increase the probability of new wars for a variety of reasons. Among other explanations, previous armed conflict implies a legacy of weapon stocks, skills, and organizational capital (Collier & Hoeffler 2004), may lead to the entrenchment of grievances (Kalyvas 2007) as well as to biased risk assessments (Rydgren 2007), and may make violent tactics more acceptable (Laitin 1995).[34] A history of armed conflict may also influence SD referendums, for example by raising antagonism between states and SDMs. Reassuringly, models 13 and 14 in Table 7.10 show that our conclusions regarding the effects of SD referendums on conflict onset are unaffected. Meanwhile, the coefficient for previous conflicts is positive as suggested by existing arguments but not statistically significant.[35]

Finally, I add a dummy capturing whether the leaders of an SDM issued a unilateral sovereignty declaration in the previous year. Sovereignty declarations constitute public announcements that a region's relationship with the state has been or is about to be unilaterally changed (Kahn 2000). Sovereignty declarations are in some ways similar to separatist-sponsored referendums. Like separatist-sponsored referendums, sovereignty declarations defy the existing institutional framework and are likely to meet a strong and possibly violent response by the state. Further, in some cases sovereignty declarations and separatist-sponsored referendums coincide temporally. For example, the Armenians in Azerbaijan declared themselves to be independent from Azerbaijan in September 1991 and in December 1991 reaffirmed this decision via a unilateral referendum. The omission of sovereignty declaration may therefore bias estimates of the effects of unilateral SD referendums. However, it should be noted that controlling for sovereignty declarations is not unproblematic because sovereignty declarations cannot only oc-

[34]For additional reasons why conflict might beget conflict see the discussion in Walter (2004).

[35]I am not aware of an argument that the number of previous conflicts would affect the duration of conflicts. If the number of previous conflicts is nonetheless added to the conflict continuation models, the effects of SD referendums remain stable while the count of previous conflicts turns out to be insignificant.

cur before referendums (as in the Armenian example) but also after referendums. For example, Slovenia and Croatia both declared independence in late June 1991 after voting on independence in December 1990 and May 1991, respectively. As the referendums might have affected the decision to declare independence, this raises the possibility of post-treatment bias. Despite this danger, Models 15–18 Table in 7.10 show that the effects of unilateral SD referendums on conflict onset and continuation decrease only marginally when sovereignty declarations are added to the specification and remain statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ and $p < 0.01$, respectively.[36] The effects of agreed SD referendums remain similar as well.

7.5.4 Fixed Effects

We have now seen that the effects of SD referendums on conflict onset and continuation are generally robust to the addition of further covariates, with the partial exception of the short-term effect of agreed SD referendums on conflict onset. This strengthens confidence in the plausibility of the effects reported above (barring the short-term effect of agreed SD referendums on conflict onset), but cannot exclude the possibility that the results are driven by hidden bias due to unobserved confounders. As argued in the data and methods section, a potential candidate for hidden bias is public support for the goals of separatist movements, which is difficult to measure cross-nationally but is likely to affect both SD referendums and separatist armed conflict. In addition, there could be a range of other confounders that I have missed.

In the context of time-series cross-sectional analysis, fixed effects estimation offers an opportunity to account for at least some of the unobserved variables that may bias results. Fixed effects estimation drops all cross-sectional variation between SD disputes and considers only longitudinal variation within SD disputes (Angrist & Pischke 2009). Thus, estimates become robust to unobserved unit-level confounders. To evaluate sensitivity to unit-level confounders, I re-estimate all models with SD dispute fixed effects. This design is robust to confounding due to any time-invariant (or very slowly changing) unobserved trait by the state, by the SDM, or by the ethnic group on whose behalf SDMs claim self-rule. Examples of variables that often change slowly or not at all over time include political institutions, political culture, socio-economic status, or long-standing antagonisms between ethnic groups. Table 7.11 shows the results. The

[36]The conclusion remains the same if sovereignty declarations in the current year are considered or sovereignty declarations in the previous two years (not shown).

Table 7.11: Fixed effects estimates

	(1) Onset	(2) Onset	(3) Cont.	(4) Cont.
SD referendums				
Agreed SD referendum$_{t\text{-}1}$	−0.005		−0.621**	
	(0.006)		(0.237)	
Agreed SD referendum$_{t\text{-}1/t\text{-}10}$		−0.013**		−0.307
		(0.007)		(0.343)
Unilateral SD referendum$_{t\text{-}1}$	0.143**		0.293***	
	(0.066)		(0.103)	
Unilateral SD referendum$_{t\text{-}1/t\text{-}10}$		0.016		0.026
		(0.020)		(0.047)
Controls				
Democracy$_{t\text{-}1}$	0.003*	0.003*	0.000	0.001
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Democracy$_{t\text{-}1}{}^2$	−0.000***	−0.000***	−0.001	−0.001
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Number of ethnic groups	0.001	0.001	0.050	0.046
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.110)	(0.124)
ln(group size)	0.025	0.024	0.162	0.149
	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.179)	(0.202)
Government inclusion	0.001	0.002	−0.103	−0.087
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.076)	(0.073)
De facto independence	0.023	0.032	0.035	0.030
	(0.063)	(0.065)	(0.038)	(0.040)
Government repression$_{t\text{-}1}$	0.033**	0.034**	0.004	0.002
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.020)	(0.020)
Secession claim	0.037***	0.038***	0.083**	0.090**
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.038)	(0.039)
Nonviolent campaign$_{t\text{-}1}$	0.079**	0.087**	−0.030	−0.037
	(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.032)	(0.027)
Year = 1970-1990	−0.019**	−0.018**	0.020	0.018
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.029)	(0.028)
Year = 1991-2012	−0.049***	−0.049***	0.016	0.013
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.047)	(0.045)
Self-rule concession$_{t\text{-}1}$	0.006		−0.138**	
	(0.013)		(0.069)	
Self-rule concession$_{t\text{-}1/t\text{-}10}$		0.001		−0.066**
		(0.008)		(0.032)
Temporal dependence				
Peace/conflict years	0.001**	0.001*	−0.002	−0.003
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Peace/conflict years^2	0.000	0.000	−0.000	−0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Peace/conflict years^3	−0.000	−0.000	0.000	0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
R^2	0.030	0.024	0.077	0.054
N	7107	7107	1501	1501

Note: All models include SD dispute fixed effects and are estimated with OLS. Estimates for the constant not shown. Two-tailed heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors clustered at the SD dispute level in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

short-term effect of agreed SD referendums on conflict onset decreases in size and contrary to the main model is no longer significant at $p < 0.10$ (see model 1). Again, this may reflect some liberal democracy bias that is missed by the covariates (this bias is likely to be close to time-invariant). It may also be partly due to the low number of cases. The long-term effect of agreed SD referendums, which is also based on more cases, again remains significant at $p < 0.05$. The other referendum estimates remain similar as well. Note that model 3 suggests an even stronger short-term effect of unilateral SD referendums on conflict continuation (plus 29 points).

7.5.5 Hidden Bias

That results are robust to the inclusion of fixed effects (with the exception of the short-term effect of agreed SD referendums on conflict onset) further strengthens the plausibility of my findings. However, fixed effects estimation can only account for some unobserved confounders—time-invariant or very slowly changing unit-specific factors—but not for others that might be changing over time. Thus, in a final step, I subject my estimates of the effects of SD referendums on conflict onset and continuation to a formal sensitivity analysis.

The goal of formal sensitivity analysis is to provide a sense of how large hidden bias would have to be so as to invalidate a finding. That is, formal sensitivity analysis aims to make a quantitative statement about the size of hidden bias needed to overturn results (Clarke 2009, Rosenbaum 2002). The development of the method of formal sensitivity analysis is closely associated with the work of Paul Rosenbaum (Rosenbaum & Rubin 1983, Rosenbaum 1987, Rosenbaum 1988, Rosenbaum 2002). An early application of formal sensitivity analysis can be found in Cornfield, Haenszel, Hammond, Lilienfeld, Shimkin & Wynder's (1959) classic study of the effect of smoking on lung cancer. Other, more recent examples in applied research include Buckley & Schneider (2007), Poast (2012), and Hainmueller & Hangartner (2013).

The practical approach to formal sensitivity analysis I take is the Generalized Sensitivity Analysis (GSA) routine developed by Harada (2013). GSA is similar in logic to the approach proposed by Imbens (2003), but is more computationally feasible and also more versatile as it can generate sensitivity analyses based on test statistics and for continuous treatment variables. Further, contrary to the methods proposed by Rosenbaum and others, GSA (like Imbens' method) does not require matched samples. Matching is problematic in the present case due to the low number of SD referendums (i.e. treated units), especially in the case of the conflict

continuation models. Analogously to Imbens (2003), GSA assesses sensitivity to hidden bias based on two parameters: one that describes the relationship between the putative unobserved confounder and the treatment and one that describes the relationship between the putative unobserved confounder with the outcome. GSA estimates these parameters by repeatedly generating candidate values for the unobserved confounder based on residualized versions of the treatment and the outcome variables, saving only those values that change the treatment effect by a pre-specified amount. The values of the sensitivity parameters are then obtained by fitting a regression model with the estimated values of the unobserved confounder. Effect estimates can be judged robust if the set of these values suggests that an omitted confounder would have to have unreasonably strong partial correlations (i.e. correlations independent of observed covariates) with the treatment and/or outcome under consideration. Reasonableness can be judged by comparing the partial correlations needed to overturn results with the partial correlations of the observed covariates.

I evaluate sensitivity to hidden bias for a total of four effects: the long-term effect of agreed SD referendums on conflict onset, the short-term effect of unilateral SD referendums on conflict onset, as well as the short-term effects of agreed and unilateral SD referendums on conflict continuation. I do not consider the short-term effect of agreed SD referendums on conflict onset as this effect has proven not robust in several specifications. I set up the GSA procedure so that it generates the sensitivity parameters at which estimated effects are no longer significant at the 10% level in two-tailed tests. In all models, I control for the standard list of covariates used in the main section plus the one-year lag of logged GDP per capita. As shown above, the addition of GDP per capita decreases the effect of agreed SD referendums on conflict onset while increasing its variability, probably because it picks up some liberal democracy bias. Thus, adding GDP per capita constitutes a conservative approach.[37] An added benefit is that GDP per capita provides a good benchmark to evaluate the sensitivity to hidden bias, given its strong and well-known correlation with intrastate armed conflict and conflict onset in particular. As above, all models are estimated with OLS and all test statistics are based on heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors clustered at the SD dispute level.

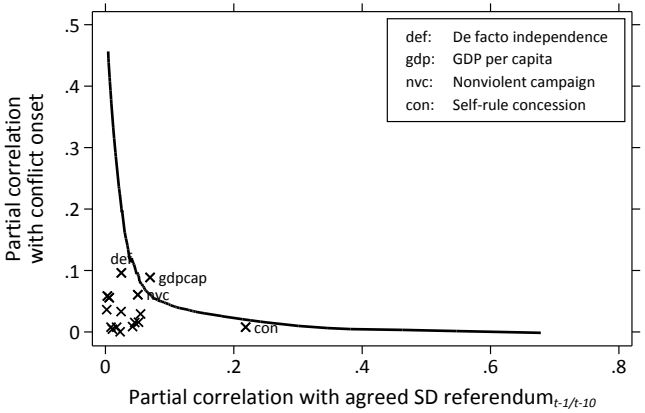
[37] As shown above, adding the number of past SD referendums in nearby countries to the specification had the same effect, but once GDP per capita is controlled for, the number of nearby SD referendums no longer has a significant effect on conflict onset. Due to this, I do not add this variable to the specification, though additional tests suggest that results remain similar if the number of nearby SD referendums is added as well.

The results of the sensitivity analyses are in Figure 7.6. The black curves show how strongly an unobserved variable (or a combination of unobserved variables) would have to be correlated with the different types of referendums and conflict onset or continuation so that the effects are no longer significant at $p < 0.10$. For example, Figure 7.6b shows that an unobserved confounder would have to have a partial correlation of about 0.20 with unilateral SD referendums and about 0.10 with conflict onset to make the effect of unilateral SD referendums insignificant at the 10% level. The X's show the partial correlations of the observed covariates with SD referendums and conflict onset or continuation.

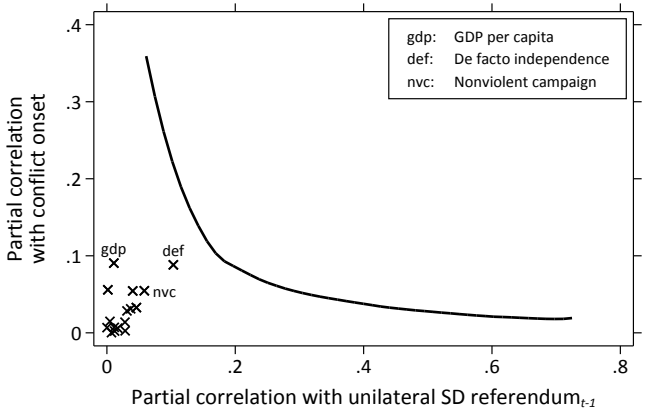
Figure 7.6a suggests that the long-term peace-enhancing effect of agreed SD referendums on conflict onset is relatively sensitive to hidden bias. The curve indicating the point at which the effect is no longer significant at the 10% level comes quite close to a number of observed covariates (de facto independence, nonviolent campaigns, and self-rule concessions), and GDP per capita is even above the curve. This suggests that if a variable (or a combination of variables) was omitted that correlates as strongly with agreed SD referendums and conflict onset as GDP per capita, or only a little stronger than de facto independence, nonviolent campaigns, or self-rule concessions, the long-term effect of agreed SD referendums on conflict onset would no longer be significant at $p < 0.10$. This does not necessarily invalidate the result. GDP per capita constitutes one of the strongest, if not the strongest, known correlate of conflict onset (Hegre & Sambanis 2006). Another variable that correlates as strongly with conflict onset (or agreed SD referendums) may well not exist. Nevertheless, the formal sensitivity analysis suggests that the estimated long-term effect of agreed SD referendums on conflict onset is relatively fragile to hidden bias.

The remaining effects turn out to be much more robust. Figure 7.6b shows that all observed covariates lie clearly below the curve for the short-term effect of unilateral SD referendums on conflict onset. To push the effect of unilateral SD referendums on conflict onset above the 10% level, it would take a confounder that is twice as strongly correlated with unilateral SD referendums or conflict onset as de facto independence, the strongest confounder in the model. To give another example, it would take a confounder that is about seven times as strongly correlated with conflict onset than GDP per capita while being as strongly correlated with unilateral SD referendums as the second strongest predictor of unilateral SD referendums in the model, nonviolent campaigns. While the possibility that such a strong unobserved confounder exists cannot be excluded, it appears relatively unlikely.

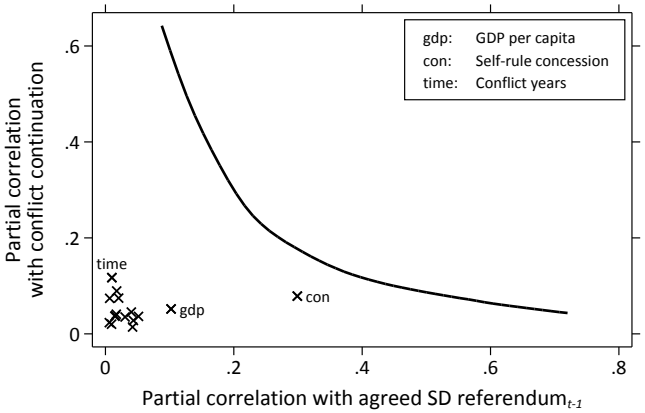
Figure 7.6: How large hidden bias would have to be so that the effects of agreed and unilateral SD referendums on conflict onset and continuation are no longer significant at $p < 0.10$ in two-tailed tests



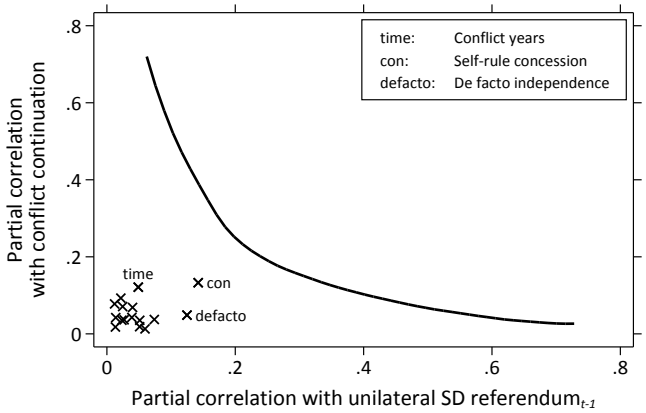
(a) Agreed SD referendum$_{t\text{-}1/t\text{-}10}$ → conflict onset



(b) Unilateral SD referendum$_{t\text{-}1}$ → conflict onset



(c) Agreed SD referendum$_{t\text{-}1}$ → conflict continuation



(d) Unilateral SD referendum$_{t\text{-}1}$ → conflict continuation

A similar picture emerges for the short-term effects of agreed and unilateral SD referendums on conflict continuation. Figures 7.6c and 7.6d show that all observed covariates do not even come close to the values at which the respective effects would turn insignificant at the 10% level. To overturn the result for agreed SD referendums, it would take a confounder that has the same correlation with agreed SD referendums than self-rule concessions, but twice the correlation of self-rule concessions with conflict continuation. Such a variable is unlikely to exist. The correlation between agreed SD referendums and self-rule reforms is close to tautological and no other variable is likely to correlate with agreed SD referendums to such an extent. Further, the rebels' ultimate goal in these conflicts is self-rule, so it appears very unlikely that a variable exists that would affect the risk of conflict continuation by twice as much as major self-rule reforms. Figure 7.6d leads to similar conclusions regarding the size of an unobserved confounder needed to overturn the short-term effect of unilateral SD referendums on conflict continuation. Despite the relatively small number of cases, the short-term effects of agreed and unilateral SD referendums on conflict continuation thus turn out reasonably robust to hidden bias.

7.6 Summary and Discussion

This chapter evaluated the empirical link between agreed and unilateral SD referendums and separatist armed conflict based on large-N regression models analyzing all noncolonial SD disputes in European and Asian countries from 1945 to 2012. To facilitate causal identification, separate analyses were conducted for conflict onset and continuation, two phenomena that existing research suggests are in part driven by different theoretical processes. All effect estimates were subjected to an extensive sensitivity analysis, including a formal sensitivity analysis to probe their robustness to hidden bias.

The results of the empirical analysis lend strong support to the idea that SD referendums differentially affect the risk of separatist armed conflict depending on whether they are mutually agreed or unilaterally initiated. Agreed SD referendums, on the one hand, were found to substantially increase the probability that violence stops in the context of ongoing violent conflicts. Further, agreed SD referendums were found to have a small but non-negligible negative effect on the risk that nonviolent SD disputes turn violent. Crucially, agreed SD referendums turned out to decrease the risk of conflict onset (though not of conflict continuation) not only in the short, but also in the longer term. This suggests that mutually agreed SD referendums pay a

peace dividend way into the future.

Unilateral SD referendums, in stark contrast to agreed SD referendums, were found to have a destructive potential. The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that unilateral SD referendums substantially increase the probability of both separatist armed conflict onset and continuation. Crucially, unilateral SD referendums' destructive potential was found to play out mostly in close temporal proximity to the referendums, suggesting that unilateral SD referendums often herald a short countdown to (yet more) civil war.

The sensitivity analysis found the majority of the effects to be robust. Some question marks remain behind the effect of agreed SD referendums on conflict onset. This applies, in particular, to their short-term effect on conflict onset, which turns out sensitive to several specification and measurement choices. By contrast, agreed SD referendums' long-term effect on conflict onset is robust across a great number of measurement, specification, and estimator choices. Some question marks remain as the formal sensitivity analysis suggested that hidden bias roughly equal to the amount of variation explained by covariates such as GDP per capita or nonviolent campaigns would suffice to render the effect insignificant. This does not mean that estimates of the implications of agreed SD referendums for conflict onset are necessarily driven by hidden bias. Variables such as GDP per capita constitute strong confounders, and an equally strong unobserved confounder may well not exist. Nevertheless, a note of caution is clearly justified.

All remaining effects—the short-term effect of agreed SD referendums on conflict continuation and the short-term effects of unilateral SD referendums on conflict onset and continuation—are clearly more robust. Among other things, they hold irrespectively of the set of covariates employed, and also if fixed effects are included accounting for time-invariant unobserved confounders. Furthermore, the formal sensitivity analysis suggested that these effects would continue to exist even if confounders have been left out that are at least twice as strong as the strongest covariates in the respective models. These effects are thus relatively robust to violations of the selection on observables assumption.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

Are referendums an apt mechanism for the resolution of separatist conflicts? This thesis argued that they can be, but only if there is prior agreement between states and self-determination movements on their terms. If such agreement is given, SD referendums may have a number of beneficial consequences, generally related to the high legitimacy associated with agreed self-determination referendums, and thus act as a catalyst for peace. First, agreed SD referendums are likely to strengthen the legitimacy and acceptance of political decisions regarding regional self-rule, thus preventing the losers from mounting a violent challenge to the result. Second, they may provide a useful avenue for a peaceful exchange of arguments, which may contribute to a reversal of hostile images and foster inter-ethnic understanding. Third, agreed SD referendums may favor the emergence of domestic or international coalitions willing to support the referendum process and its outcome, thus deterring spoilers. Fourth, agreed SD referendums can sometimes move forward a peace process that would otherwise be blocked. Fifth, decisions reached by referendum tend to be difficult to reverse without another referendum. This can create an additional constraint for future state leaders considering to revoke an earlier settlement while simultaneously providing the separatists with a confidence-building measure working to mitigate commitment problems.

However, if SD referendums are called unilaterally by states or self-determination movements, this thesis argued that SD referendums are likely to act as a catalyst for violent conflict. Given that their legitimacy is disputed between the main conflict parties, unilateral SD referendums are unlikely to have any of the beneficial consequences associated with agreed SD referendums. The losers are unlikely to accept defeat; balanced debates are unlikely to emerge; and broad-based coalitions are unlikely to form around unilateral SD referendums. Rather than

contribute to peace, unilateral SD referendums are thus often more likely to make a bad situation worse and yet increase chances for separatist armed conflict. Several reasons were made out. First, unilateral SD referendums tend to entrench perceptions of unfair treatment and thus foster the motivational basis for the use of violence. Second, unilateral SD referendums, if initiated by the separatists, can lead to reputation costs for the state and thus create a strategic incentive to crack down on the separatists so as to set a precedent. Finally, the difficulty to reverse decisions reached by referendum, while largely a positive feature if SD referendums are agreed, may in the case of unilateral SD referendums significantly reduce the scope for a negotiated settlement that would allow the parties to avoid violent conflict.

A series of large-N tests supported the notion that the conflict resolution potential of SD referendums depends on prior agreement between states and self-determination movements on their terms. Relying on new data on SD referendums and noncolonial SD disputes in European and Asian countries, I found evidence that agreed SD referendums decrease the probability of new outbreaks of separatist armed conflict while increasing the probability that ongoing separatist armed conflicts come to an end. Crucially, the conflict-dampening effect of agreed SD referendums on onsets of new violent conflicts appears to play out not only in the short, but also in the longer term. This suggests that agreed SD referendums pay a peace dividend way into the future. In stark contrast to this, I found that unilaterally initiated SD referendums substantially increase the short-term risk of new separatist armed conflicts and, where violence is already ongoing, the risk that separatist armed conflict continues.

Despite these strong results, this study has several limitations that should be addressed in future work. Most importantly, this is an observational study and bias due to omitted confounders cannot thus be fully precluded. Throughout the dissertation, I have emphasized the endogeneity of occurrences of agreed and unilateral SD referendums to conflict processes. To counter the emanating threat to causal inferences, this study employed multiple regression controlling for a carefully assembled list of covariates. In addition, an extensive sensitivity analysis was conducted to evaluate the robustness of the findings. All in all, this exercise strengthened confidence in the results. A partial exception emerged for the effect of agreed SD referendums on outbreaks of new separatist armed conflicts, which proved somewhat sensitive to specification and measurement choices and to the possibility of hidden bias. This does not mean that the result should be discarded altogether, but caution is justified. Meanwhile, the remaining estimates proved robust to a diverse set of measurement and specification choices,

including models with SD dispute fixed effects which by design account for unmeasured, time-invariant and slowly changing confounders located at the group and state level. Moreover, a formal sensitivity analysis suggested that they are relatively robust to the possibility of omitted variable bias. Thus, with the noted partial exception, we can be reasonably confident that prior agreement on the terms indeed shapes the conflict resolution potential of SD referendums. Still, the possibility that the results are driven by omitted variable bias cannot be fully excluded. To yet strengthen causal inference, future studies should therefore reevaluate the effects of agreed and unilateral SD referendums while taking into account additional potential sources of confounding. Future research should also seek to triangulate the results of this study with other methods, such as matching.[1] At least in theory, natural experiments constitute another attractive choice, though as noted, situations with as-if-random assignment of SD referendums are unlikely to exist. This should not, however, prevent us from continuing to look out for situations approximating the experimental ideal.

A second important limitation emerges as a result of the present study's focus on European and Asian countries. While a 'naive' bivariate assessment suggested that the hypothesized patterns are likely to hold globally, data limitations prevented a full analysis at the global level that takes into account the effects of confounders. Globalization of the SDM-Eurasia dataset will enable future studies to study the effects of agreed and unilateral SD referendums that span the whole world. To further strengthen external validity, future studies may also seek to extend the focus to referendums held in the colonial context and to the period before 1945.

Third, this study effectively treated causality as a black box at the empirical level. That is, while a number of possible mechanisms linking agreed and unilateral SD referendums were made out at the theoretical level, their contribution to conflict outcomes was not evaluated empirically. Ideally, though, we would not only like to know about causal effects but also about the reasons for these effects. Are agreed SD referendums linked to peace because they make it difficult for the losers to take up arms? Or because they contribute to reversals of hostile images? Is it the coalitions that tend to emerge around these referendums, or that they may provide a way out of negotiation deadlock, or that they mitigate commitment problems and

[1]Given the low number of SD referendums held during ongoing armed conflicts, matching is difficult, if not impossible, to implement for the conflict continuation case. However, given the higher number of agreed and unilateral SD referendums held during peace, matching should be feasible for the conflict onset case. Preliminary results suggest that the conflict onset findings uphold in matched samples.

increase the durability of settlements? Or is it all of the above? Conversely, are unilateral SD referendums dangerous because they entrench grievances, because they imply reputation costs for the state, or because they constrain the bargaining space? Are there additional, yet unidentified mechanisms? To further improve our knowledge about the relationship between SD referendums and violent conflict, future studies should investigate the causal pathways linking agreed and unilateral SD referendums to conflict outcomes, for example through process tracing.

Fourth, this study looked exclusively at the implications of SD referendums for separatist armed conflict. However, SD referendums may also be linked to other types of political violence. The Yugoslav experience, for example, suggests that separatist-sponsored referendums may not only disturb the relations between states and self-determination movements, but also the relations between between majority and minority groups in separatist regions. The referendum in Croatia, for example, caused ruptures not only between Croatia and the federal center, but also between Croats and Serbs within Croatia. A similar scenario played out with Bosnia's independence referendum. Future research should investigate the implications of agreed and unilateral SD referendums for forms of political violence other than separatist armed conflict, in particular intercommunal clashes, but also terrorism and one-sided violence. Future studies should also investigate whether agreed and unilateral SD referendums have ramifications for inter-state war, for example between secessionist and rump states after a successful secession.

Fifth, there may be factors other than prior agreement that shape the conflict resolution potential of SD referendums. The existing literature suggests several candidates, including the timing of SD referendums in peace processes (e.g. Collin 2015, Loizides 2014, Sen 2015), the decision rule (e.g. He 2002, Laponce 2004), and the extent to which SD referendums provide space for deliberation (Tierney 2012). While I believe that prior agreement constitutes the key condition shaping the conflict resolution potential of SD referendums, other factors may matter in conjunction with it. Future studies should thus build on the results of this study and explore the conditions under which agreed SD referendums are most beneficial as well as the conditions under which unilateral SD referendums are most dangerous. In particular, future studies should investigate if, and under what conditions, agreed SD referendums should be accompanied by other policy measures so that they can unleash their maximum peace-enhancing potential. The experience of East Timor, for example, suggests that agreed SD referendums may sometimes have to be backed up with a peacekeeping mission. More generally, international election observers or, in extreme cases, the neutralization of the local administration may sometimes be

necessary to guarantee the fair conduct of a referendum. Where the referendum propaganda is likely to be biased, the international community may have to provide neutral civic education services, or support those willing to provide it. It may also make sense to use the positive dynamics that tend to emanate from agreed SD referendums to support the parties in setting up stable institutions that safeguard inter-ethnic cooperation in the long term. Finally, while agreed SD referendums may help to settle conflicts over self-determination, this may only initial the next crisis: a war between different factions of the (former) separatists over state power. In South Sudan, for example, a civil war over the government ensued not long after independence in 2011. Thus, in some cases agreed SD referendums may have to be backed up with long-term efforts at peace-building between different factions of the (former) separatists.

Even though additional works needs thus be done, the results of this study nevertheless suggest several implications for theory and policy. In terms of the former, this study calls into question the black-or-white arguments made by enthusiastic supporters and ardent critics of SD referendums. SD referendums are not, as some have suggested, an unconditional force for peace. But they are also not, as others have suggested, almost always prone to increase tensions and escalate conflict dynamics. What this study shows is that SD referendums can both increase and decrease chances for peace, depending on the conditions under which they are invoked. Future theorizing on the conflict resolution potential of SD referendums should thus move away from black-or-white assessments and instead focus on the conditions under which SD referendums are or are not advisable while, as argued, building on the notion that prior agreement shapes the conflict resolution potential of SD referendums.

Another important lesson emerges for the literature on the determinants of SD referendums. To date, this literature has tended to treat SD referendums as if they were all driven by the same theoretical process. What this study shows is that in order to get a better grip on why SD referendums emerge, the concept needs to be disaggregated. Agreed and unilateral SD referendums, and to a lesser extent their sub-types (such as unilateral SD referendums initiated by states or by the separatists), have very different motivations and, as a result of this, tend to emerge under rather different conditions. As shown in the empirical analysis of the determinants of SD referendums, variables such as the level of democracy, state repression, provisions for direct democracy, and de facto independence relate differentially to agreed and unilateral SD referendums and/or to their sub-types. Other variables, such as large-scale protest, may have more uniform effects, but these uniform effects are likely to be due to non-uniform reasons.

Future work on the determinants of SD referendums should build on these insights and take into account the distinction between agreed and unilateral SD referendums, as well as their sub-types.

In addition, this study suggests several policy implications. SD referendums are likely to remain with us for the foreseeable future. Future referendums are currently debated in conflict-ridden societies around the world, including Bougainville, New Caledonia, Kashmir, Cyprus, Western Sahara, Darfur, Abyei, and Nagorno-Karabakh (Loizides 2014, Tierney 2012). Israel has recently enacted a law requiring a national referendum prior to territorial concessions to the Palestinians as part of any peace deal (Goddard 2013, Lis 2014). Critically, international actors have often encouraged SD referendums, both in the past and present. The results of this study suggest that SD referendums may, even should, continue to be encouraged—however, with a crucial qualifier. SD referendums have value for conflict resolution, but according to this study this value is limited to situations where there is prior agreement between states and self-determination movements on the rules of the game. This suggests several lessons for policymaking. First, efforts in support of SD referendums should have a strong focus on the creation of mutual agreement on their design. In some cases, SD referendums are relatively easily agreed by states and self-determination movements. This applies, for example, to those (few) countries with established and mutually accepted constitutional provisions laying down procedural rules for referendums on self-rule. In such cases, little outside intervention will be needed. However, more often than not, the parties will find it difficult to agree on the terms of an SD referendum. Many countries do not have provisions for SD referendums, or they are not mutually accepted. In these cases, prior agreement can only be reached via negotiations. Here, a crucial role may go to the international community as negotiation facilitator. As the examples of Northern Ireland, Montenegro, and South Sudan show, international diplomacy can play a constructive role in bringing negotiations on the form of SD referendums to success.

Second, where mutual agreement on the rules of SD referendums is not feasible, efforts should focus on the prevention of occurrences of unilateral SD referendums. Even with active international engagement, mutual agreement on the rules of SD referendums will often remain an illusion. Many states are fundamentally unwilling to decentralize, let alone let a region secede, whereas many separatists are only willing to accept a referendum if it guarantees their victory. At the heart of many conflicts over self-determination is a conflict about 'peoplehood'—the definition of the people that is entitled to self-determination. This often makes it impossible

to reach an agreement on the referendum demos—that is, the definition of the people that is entitled to decide on self-determination (Oklopcic 2012, Tierney 2007). Other aspects of referendum design, including the decision rule or the referendum issue, may be similarly contested. This study suggests that if agreement between the parties on the design of an SD referendum is not possible, SD referendums should be discouraged rather than encouraged. A scenario such as the one in Bosnia in 1992, where the Western powers encouraged the Bosnian government to hold a unilateral referendum on its independence from Yugoslavia, should be avoided. An exception may emerge if the international community is prepared to protect the outcome of such referendums militarily, but even then unilateral SD referendums will fail to create legitimacy among all stakeholders. Where no agreement on the rules of an SD referendum is possible, policy should instead be geared towards discouraging the parties from invocations of the people.

Finally, in situations where unilateral SD referendums cannot be prevented, measures aimed at conflict deescalation should be adopted. In a sense, unilateral SD referendums can be seen as an early warning indicator for separatist armed conflict. While more work needs to be done to identify the exact conditions under which they pose the greatest risk, occurrences of unilateral SD referendums should be countered with efforts aimed at calming the waves. In extreme cases, this may mean the deployment of peacekeepers. However, diplomacy may prove sufficient in many situations. Consider the example of the unilateral autonomy referendums held in 1993 in Narva and Sillämae, two cities in Estonia's Russian-dominated northeast. At the time, many observers feared that these referendums would unleash violence and war (Laitin 2001). However, bloodshed could be prevented, not least as a result of a determined response by the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which convinced the Estonian government not to stop the votes using violent means and at the same time to make some concessions on the controversial citizenship law that had provided the spark for the referendums (Peters 1995, Smith 2002*a*). Determined post-referendum interventions, diplomatic or otherwise, could help alleviate the threat posed by unilateral SD referendums to peaceful inter-ethnic coexistence.

Appendix A

List of All Self-Determination Referendums, 1776–2015

Table A.1: Self-determination referendums, 1776–2015

Country	Territory	Year	Issue description	Type of SD	Turn-out	SD passed	SD yes	Colo-nial	Agreed	Sub-type	SDM(s)
United Kingdom	Massachusetts	1776	Declaration of Independence	I	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
Papal States	Avignon, Comtat Venaissin	1791	Merger with France	T	-	1	66.08	0	-	-	-
Kingdom of Sardinia	Savoy	1792	Merger with France	T	-	1	99.8	0	-	-	-
Kingdom of Sardinia	Nice	1792	Merger with France	T	-	1	99.9	0	-	-	-
United States	Maine	1792	Separation from Massachusetts	A	-	0	46.09	0	-	-	-
Austria-Hungary	Belgium	1793	Merger with France	T	-	1	-	0	-	-	-
Holy Roman Empire	Rhineland	1793	Merger with France	T	-	1	-	0	-	-	-

Self-determination referendums, 1776–2015 (continued)

Country	Territory	Year	Issue description	Type of SD	Turn-out	SD passed	SD yes	Colo-nial	Agreed	Sub-type	SDM(s)
Austria-Hungary	Northwestern Belgium	1795	Merger with France	T	-	1	-	0	-	-	-
Switzerland	Veltlin	1797	Merger with Cisalpine Republic	T	-	1	-	0	-	-	-
Austria-Hungary	Venice	1797	Return to France	T	-	1	53.77	0	-	-	-
United States	Maine	1797	Separation from Massachusetts	A	-	1	-	0	-	-	-
Switzerland	Mulhouse	1798	Merger with France	T	-	1	97.52	0	-	-	-
Switzerland	Geneva	1798	Merger with France	T	-	1	-	0	-	-	-
Kingdom of Sardinia	Piedmont	1799	Merger with France	T	-	1	99.9	0	-	-	-
United States	Maine	1807	Separation from Massachusetts	A	-	0	26.38	0	-	-	-
United States	Maine	1816	Separation from Massachusetts	A	44.74	1	60.39	0	-	-	-
United States	Maine	1816	Separation from Massachusetts	A	59.12	0	53.09	0	-	-	-
Spain	Chile	1817	Independence	I	-	1	100	1	-	-	-
United States	Maine	1819	Separation from Massachusetts	A	-	1	70.56	0	-	-	-
United States	Maine	1819	Constitution (separate statehood)	A	-	1	91.9	0	-	-	-
Mexico	Chiapas	1824	Merger with United Provinces of Central America	T	91.11	0	38.42	0	-	-	-
Switzerland	Basel-Country	1831	Separate canton	A	-	1	82.82	0	-	-	-
Mexico	Texas	1836	Merger with US	T	-	1	97.3	0	-	-	-
Mexico	Texas	1845	Merger with US	T	-	1	94.09	0	-	-	-
United States	Liberia	1846	Independence	I	66	1	52	1	-	-	-
Austria-Hungary	Lombardy	1848	Merger with Sardinia	T	85	1	99.88	0	-	-	-
Austria-Hungary	Venice	1848	Merger with Sardinia	T	-	1	90	0	-	-	-

Self-determination referendums, 1776–2015 (continued)

Country	Territory	Year	Issue description	Type of SD	Turn-out	SD passed	SD yes	Colo-nial	Agreed	Sub-type	SDM(s)
Monaco	Menton, Roquebrune	1848	Merger with Sardinia	T	-	1	100	0	-	-	-
United States	Maryland (Liberia)	1853	Independence	I	-	1	100	1	-	-	-
United States	Maryland (Liberia)	1857	Merger with Liberia	T	-	1	100	1	-	-	-
United States	Pikes Peak Country (Colorado)	1859	Separate status	A	-	1	100	0	-	-	-
United States	Pikes Peak Country (Colorado)	1859	Constitution (separate territory)	A	-	1	-	0	-	-	-
Papal States	Bologna	1860	Merger with Sardinia	T	80.48	1	100	0	-	-	-
Kingdom of Sardinia	Nice	1860	Merger with France	T	84.44	1	99.38	0	-	-	-
Kingdom of Sardinia	Savoy	1860	Merger with France	T	96.6	1	99.82	0	-	-	-
Papal States	Marche	1860	Merger with Sardinia	T	63.7	1	99.1	0	-	-	-
Papal States	Umbria	1860	Merger with Sardinia	T	79.36	1	99.61	0	-	-	-
United States	Tennessee	1861	Secession	I	-	0	45.34	0	-	-	-
United States	Arkansas	1861	Secession	I	-	1	63.4	0	-	-	-
United States	Texas	1861	Secession	I	-	1	75.78	0	-	-	-
United States	North Carolina	1861	Secession	I	-	0	49.65	0	-	-	-
United States	Virginia	1861	Secession	I	-	1	77.92	0	-	-	-
United States	Tennessee	1861	Secession	I	-	1	68.89	0	-	-	-
United States	West Virginia	1861	Separation from Virginia	A	-	1	95.93	0	-	-	-
United States	West Virginia	1862	Constitution (separate statehood)	A	-	1	97.25	0	-	-	-
United States	West Virginia	1863	Constitutional amendment (separate statehood)	A	-	1	98	0	-	-	-

Self-determination referendums, 1776–2015 (continued)

Country	Territory	Year	Issue description	Type of SD	Turn-out	SD passed	SD yes	Colo-nial	Agreed	Sub-type	SDM(s)
France	Venice	1866	Merger with Italy	T	-	1	99.99	0	-	-	-
Denmark	Danish West Indies (AVI)	1868	Merger with US	T	-	1	98.26	1	-	-	-
Papal States	Rome	1870	Merger with Italy	T	80.75	1	98.89	0	-	-	-
Sweden	Saint Barthelemy	1877	Merger with France	T	67.9	1	99.72	1	-	-	-
United States	South Dakota	1883	Constitution (separate statehood)	A	-	1	64.42	0	-	-	-
United States	South Dakota	1885	Constitution (separate statehood)	A	-	1	79.35	0	-	-	-
United States	North Dakota	1887	Division of Dakota territory	A	-	0	32.9	0	-	-	-
United States	South Dakota	1887	Division of Dakota territory	A	-	0	65.75	0	-	-	-
Sweden	Norway	1905	Independence	I	85.42	1	99.95	0	-	-	-
Denmark	Danish West Indies (AVI)	1916	Cession to the US	T	-	1	99.85	1	-	-	-
Denmark	Denmark	1916	Cession of AVI to the US	T	37.42	1	64.35	1	-	-	-
Russia	Kars, Batum, Ardahan	1918	Merger with Turkey	T	-	1	97.79	0	-	-	-
Denmark	Iceland	1918	Autonomy	A	43.84	1	92.55	1	-	-	-
Austria	Vorarlberg	1919	Merger with Switzerland	T	-	1	80.75	0	-	-	-
Finland	Aland Islands	1919	Merger with Sweden	T	96.4	1	95.48	0	-	-	-
Czechoslovakia	Hlucin region	1919	Return to Germany	T	-	1	93.7	0	-	-	-
Poland	Lower Silesia	1919	Return to Germany	T	75	1	97	0	-	-	-
Belgium	Eupen, Malmedy	1920	Return to Germany	T	-	0	0.8	0	-	-	-
Germany	North Schleswig	1920	Merger with Denmark	T	90.12	1	74.86	0	-	-	-
Germany	Central Schleswig	1920	Merger with Denmark	T	90.76	NA	19.84	0	-	-	-
Germany	Allenstein	1920	Merger with Poland	T	87.4	NA	2.15	0	-	-	-
Germany	Marienwerder	1920	Merger with Poland	T	84	NA	7.64	0	-	-	-

Self-determination referendums, 1776–2015 (continued)

Country	Territory	Year	Issue description	Type of SD	Turn-out	SD passed	SD yes	Colo-nial	Agreed	Sub-type	SDM(s)
Austria	Klagenfurt Basin	1920	Merger with Yugoslavia	T	95.79	0	40.96	0	-	-	-
Germany	Upper Silesia	1921	Merger with Poland	T	97.57	NA	40.93	0	-	-	-
Germany	Lower Silesia	1921	Merger with Poland	T	97.98	0	2.43	0	-	-	-
Austria	Tyrol	1921	Merger with Germany	T	-	1	98.77	0	-	-	-
Austria	Salzburg	1921	Merger with Germany	T	-	1	99.12	0	-	-	-
Austria	Sopron	1921	Merger with Hungary	T	89.45	1	65.08	0	-	-	-
Germany	Upper Silesia	1922	Separation from Prussia	A	-	0	8.9	0	-	-	-
South Africa	Rehoboth Gebied	1923	Autonomy	A	-	0	26	1	-	-	-
Latvia	Liivimaa	1923	Autonomy	A	-	1	-	0	-	-	-
Germany	Hannover	1924	Separation from Prussia	A	-	0	-	0	-	-	-
Bolivia	Bolivia	1931	Decentralization	A	-	1	78.23	0	-	-	-
Spain	Catalonia	1931	Autonomy Statute	A	75.33	1	99.45	0	-	-	-
Australia	Western Australia	1933	Independence	I	92	1	66.23	0	-	-	-
Spain	Basque Country	1933	Autonomy Statute	A	93.7	1	96.67	0	-	-	-
France	Saar	1935	Merger with Germany	T	97.86	1	90.73	1	-	-	-
United States	Philippines	1935	Independence plan	I	-	1	96.43	1	-	-	-
Spain	Galicia	1936	Autonomy Statute	A	74.52	1	99.38	0	-	-	-
Denmark	Iceland	1944	Independence	I	98.37	1	99.47	1	-	-	-
Italy	Tende, La Brigue	1945	Merger with France	T	-	1	79.19	0	0	sep	-
Mongolia	Mongolia	1945	Independence	I	98.47	1	100	0	2	arb	-
China	Inner Mongolia	1945	Merger with Mongolia	T	-	1	-	0	0	sep	Southern Mongols
Denmark	Faroe Islands	1946	Independence	I	67.61	1	50.72	0	2	arb	Faroese
United Kingdom	Sylhet	1947	Merger with Pakistan	T	51	1	56.56	1	-	-	-
United Kingdom	North West Frontier	1947	Merger with Pakistan	T	51	1	99.02	1	-	-	-
France	Tende, La Brigue	1947	Merger with France	T	98.37	1	92.72	0	1	rat	-
Pakistan	Junagadh	1948	Merger with India	T	94.74	1	99.95	1	-	-	-

Self-determination referendums, 1776–2015 (continued)

Country	Territory	Year	Issue description	Type of SD	Turn-out	SD passed	SD yes	Colo-nial	Agreed	Sub-type	SDM(s)
Pakistan	Mangrol, Manavadar, Bhatwa, Sardargarh, Babariawad	1948	Merger with India	T	-	1	99.88	1	-	-	-
United Kingdom	Newfoundland	1948	Merger with Canada or more autonomy	M	88.36	1	85.58	1	-	-	-
United States	American Virgin Islands	1948	Domestically elected executive	A	-	0	23.23	1	-	-	-
France	Chandannagar	1949	Merger with India	T	64.43	1	98.51	1	-	-	-
United Kingdom	Cyprus	1950	Merger with Greece	T	-	1	95.71	1	-	-	-
India	Nagaland	1951	Independence	I	-	1	99.9	0	0	sep	Nagas
United States	Puerto Rico	1951	Autonomy	A	58	1	76.46	1	-	-	-
United States	American Virgin Islands	1953	Domestically elected executive	A	28.67	1	55.74	1	-	-	-
Australia	New England	1953	Separation from New South Wales	A	9	1	77	0	0	sep	New Englanders
France	Saar	1955	European Statute	A	96.59	0	32.3	1	-	-	-
United Kingdom	British Togololand	1956	Merger with Ghana	T	83.6	1	63.94	1	-	-	-
India	Minicoy (Maliku)	1956	Merger with India	T	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
France	French Togoland	1956	Constitution (autonomy)	A	77.32	1	93.35	1	-	-	-
France	Benin	1958	Constitution (remaining with France)	I	55.65	0	2.16	1	-	-	-
France	Burkina Faso	1958	Constitution (remaining with France)	I	74.74	0	0.82	1	-	-	-
France	Central African Republic	1958	Constitution (remaining with France)	I	79.38	0	1.23	1	-	-	-

Self-determination referendums, 1776–2015 (continued)

Country	Territory	Year	Issue description	Type of SD	Turn-out	SD passed	SD yes	Colo-nial	Agreed	Sub-type	SDM(s)
France	Chad	1958	Constitution (remaining with France)	I	66.19	0	1.71	1	-	-	-
France	Comoros	1958	Constitution (remaining with France)	I	92.72	0	2.67	1	-	-	-
France	Congo	1958	Constitution (remaining with France)	I	78.99	0	0.62	1	-	-	-
France	Djibouti	1958	Constitution (remaining with France)	I	72.78	0	24.76	1	-	-	-
France	French Polynesia	1958	Constitution (remaining with France)	I	81.57	0	35.96	1	-	-	-
France	Gabon	1958	Constitution (remaining with France)	I	78.67	0	7.42	1	-	-	-
France	Guinea	1958	Constitution (remaining with France)	I	85.47	1	95.22	1	-	-	-
France	Ivory Coast	1958	Constitution (remaining with France)	I	97.56	0	0.01	1	-	-	-
France	Madagascar	1958	Constitution (remaining with France)	I	82.02	0	22.36	1	-	-	-
France	Mali	1958	Constitution (remaining with France)	I	45.38	0	2.46	1	-	-	-

Self-determination referendums, 1776–2015 (continued)

Country	Territory	Year	Issue description	Type of SD	Turn-out	SD passed	SD yes	Colo-nial	Agreed	Sub-type	SDM(s)
France	Mauritania	1958	Constitution (remaining with France)	I	84.22	0	5.96	1	-	-	-
France	New Caledonia	1958	Constitution (remaining with France)	I	76.86	0	1.88	1	-	-	-
France	Niger	1958	Constitution (remaining with France)	I	37.42	0	21.57	1	-	-	-
France	Saint Pierre and Miquelon	1958	Constitution (remaining with France)	I	92.72	0	1.94	1	-	-	-
France	Senegal	1958	Constitution (remaining with France)	I	80.71	0	2.45	1	-	-	-
United States	Northern Mariana Islands	1958	Reunification with Guam	A	-	1	64	1	-	-	-
Switzerland	Bern	1959	Separation from Bern	A	-	0	22.4	0	2	arb	Jurassians
United Kingdom	British Northern Cameroons	1959	Merger with Nigeria	T	87.89	0	37.75	1	-	-	-
France	Algeria	1961	Autonomy	A	59.79	1	69.08	1	-	-	-
France	France	1961	Autonomy for Algeria	A	73.76	1	74.99	1	-	-	-
United States	Northern Mariana Islands	1961	Relations with Guam and US	A	89	1	98.86	1	-	-	-
United Kingdom	British Northern Cameroons	1961	Merger with Nigeria or Ghana	T	83.27	1	100	1	-	-	-
United Kingdom	British Southern Cameroons	1961	Merger with Nigeria or Ghana	T	94.75	1	100	1	-	-	-
New Zealand	Western Samoa	1961	Independence	I	77.6	1	85.4	1	-	-	-
Portugal	Dadra, Nagar	1961	Merger with India	T	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
United Kingdom	Jamaica	1961	Independence	I	61.44	1	54.11	1	-	-	-

Self-determination referendums, 1776–2015 (continued)

Country	Territory	Year	Issue description	Type of SD	Turn-out	SD passed	SD yes	Colo-nial	Agreed	Sub-type	SDM(s)
France	France	1962	Evian Accords (Algerian independence)	I	75.33	1	90.81	1	-	-	-
France	Algeria	1962	Independence	I	91.88	1	99.72	1	-	-	-
United Kingdom	Northeastern Kenya	1962	Merger with Somalia	T	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
Nigeria	Mid-Western Region	1963	Creation of Mid-Western Region	A	89.1	1	98.77	0	1	rat	Edo
United States	Northern Mariana Islands	1963	Relations with Guam and US	M	-	1	100	1	-	-	-
Spain	Equatorial Guinea	1963	Autonomy	A	91.6	1	62.52	1	-	-	-
United Kingdom	Malta	1964	Constitution (independence)	I	82.66	1	54.47	1	-	-	-
United Kingdom	Rhodesia	1964	Independence	I	61.87	1	90.51	1	-	-	-
France	Djibouti	1967	Independence	I	94.96	0	39.4	1	-	-	-
United States	Puerto Rico	1967	Relations with US	I	63.9	0	0.6	0	0	stat	Puerto Ricans
Australia	New England	1967	Separation from New South Wales	A	92.5	0	45.8	0	2	arb	New Englanders
United Kingdom	Anguilla	1967	Separation from St. Kitts and Nevis	A	75	1	90.72	1	-	-	-
United Kingdom	Kamaran Island	1967	Merger with South Yemen	T	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
United Kingdom	Khuriya Muriya Islands	1967	Merger with South Yemen	T	-	0	-	1	-	-	-
United Kingdom	Perim Island	1967	Merger with South Yemen	T	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
Spain	Equatorial Guinea	1968	Constitution (independence)	I	91.7	1	64.32	1	-	-	-
United Kingdom	Anguilla	1969	Constitution (independence)	I	75	1	99.77	1	-	-	-

Self-determination referendums, 1776–2015 (continued)

Country	Territory	Year	Issue description	Type of SD	Turn-out	SD passed	SD yes	Colo-nial	Agreed	Sub-type	SDM(s)
United States	Northern Mariana Islands	1969	Relations with Northern Marianas, US, and Japan	M	65.26	1	99.81	1	-	-	-
Germany	Baden	1970	Restoration of Baden	A	62.59	0	18.07	0	2	arb	Badeners
United States	American Samoa	1972	Domestically elected executive	A	28.2	0	17.3	1	-	-	-
United Kingdom	Northern Ireland	1973	Merger with Ireland	T	58.66	0	1.08	0	0	stat	Catholics in Northern Ireland
United States	American Samoa	1973	Domestically elected executive	A	23.6	0	34.3	1	-	-	-
United States	American Samoa	1974	Domestically elected executive	A	17.2	0	48.2	1	-	-	-
Switzerland	Jura	1974	Separation from Bern	A	89.99	1	51.94	0	2	arb	Jurassians
United Kingdom	Tuvalu	1974	Separation from Gilbert Islands	A	88.37	1	92.84	1	-	-	-
New Zealand	Niue	1974	Constitution (free association with New Zealand)	I	-	1	65.41	1	-	-	-
France	Comoros	1974	Independence	I	93.28	1	94.57	1	-	-	-
Germany	Oldenburg	1975	Separation from Lower Saxony	A	38.3	1	81.41	0	2	arb	Oldenburgers
Germany	Schaumburg-Lippe	1975	Separation from Lower Saxony	A	50.4	1	78.83	0	2	arb	Schaumburg-Lippeners
Switzerland	South Jura	1975	Separation from Bern	A	94	0	35	0	2	arb	Jurassians
Cyprus	Northern Cyprus	1975	Constitution (independence)	I	70	1	99.39	0	0	sep	Turkish Cypriots
United States	Northern Mariana Islands	1975	Commonwealth status	A	93	1	78.82	1	-	-	-
United States	Chuuk	1975	Relations with rest of Micronesia and US	M	48.04	0	81.98	1	-	-	-

Self-determination referendums, 1776–2015 (continued)

Country	Territory	Year	Issue description	Type of SD	Turn-out	SD passed	SD yes	Colo-nial	Agreed	Sub-type	SDM(s)
United States	Marshall Islands	1975	Relations with rest of Micronesia and US	M	35.17	0	30.01	1	-	-	-
United States	Palau	1975	Relations with rest of Micronesia and US	M	42.22	0	68.04	1	-	-	-
United States	Pohnpei	1975	Relations with rest of Micronesia and US	M	56.46	1	61.96	1	-	-	-
United States	Yap	1975	Relations with rest of Micronesia and US	M	68.88	1	67.62	1	-	-	-
Switzerland	13 Jurassian municipalities	1975	Separation from Bern	A	-	NA	-	0	2	arb	Jurassians
Comoros	Mayotte	1976	Merger with France	T	83.34	1	99.42	1	-	-	-
United States	American Samoa	1976	Domestically elected executive	A	24	1	69.02	1	-	-	-
United States	Guam	1976	Relations with US	M	-	1	64.05	0	2	arb	Chamorros
United States	Palau	1976	Separate status negotations with US	I	50	1	88	1	-	-	-
Netherlands	Aruba	1977	Independence	I	70	1	95.18	1	-	-	-
Philippines	Mindanao	1977	Autonomy	A	-	NA	-	0	0	stat	Moros
France	Djibouti	1977	Independence	I	77.24	1	97.75	1	-	-	-
South Africa	Namibia	1977	Turnhalle plan	I	64.9	1	94.69	0	0	stat	Namibians
United Kingdom	Nevis	1977	Independence	I	-	1	99.66	1	-	-	-
United States	Marshall Islands	1977	Separate status negotations with US	I	-	1	63	1	-	-	-
Switzerland	Switzerland	1978	Creation of Jura	A	42.04	1	82.29	0	1	rat	Jurassians
Denmark	Greenland	1979	Home rule	A	63.2	1	73.05	0	1	rat	Greenlanders
United Kingdom	Scotland	1979	Devolution	A	63.72	0	51.62	0	1	rat	Scots
United Kingdom	Wales	1979	Devolution	A	59.01	0	20.26	0	1	rat	Welsh
Spain	Basque Country	1979	Autonomy Statute	A	58.86	1	94.6	0	1	rat	Basques
Spain	Catalonia	1979	Autonomy Statute	A	59.7	1	91.91	0	1	rat	Catalans
Spain	Andalusia	1980	Fast track autonomy	A	64.19	0	94.19	0	2	arb	Andalusians
Canada	Quebec	1980	Independence	I	85.6	0	40.44	0	2	arb	Quebecois
Austria	Vorarlberg	1980	Autonomy	A	90.83	1	69.32	0	2	arb	Vorarlbergers

Self-determination referendums, 1776–2015 (continued)

Country	Territory	Year	Issue description	Type of SD	Turn-out	SD passed	SD yes	Colo-nial	Agreed	Sub-type	SDM(s)
South Africa	Ciskei	1980	Independence	I	59.47	1	99.45	0	1	rat	Xhosa
Spain	Galicia	1980	Autonomy Statute	A	28.27	1	78.77	0	1	rat	Galicians
Spain	Andalusia	1981	Autonomy Statute	A	53.49	1	92.74	0	1	rat	Andalusians
United States	Guam	1982	Relations with US	M	37	1	62	0	2	arb	Chamorros
Canada	Northwest Territories	1982	Division of Northwest Territories	A	52.99	1	56.48	0	2	arb	Inuit
United States	Palau	1983	Compact of Free Association	I	78.55	0	62.12	1	-	-	-
United States	Micronesia	1983	Compact of Free Association	I	63.17	1	79	1	-	-	-
United States	Marshall Islands	1983	Compact of Free Association	I	83	1	57.95	1	-	-	-
Australia	Cocos (Keeling) Islands	1984	Relations with Australia	I	100	0	10.24	1	-	-	-
United States	Palau	1984	Compact of Free Association	I	71.26	0	67.1	1	-	-	-
United States	Palau	1986	Compact of Free Association	I	71.35	0	72.19	1	-	-	-
United States	Palau	1986	Compact of Free Association	I	82.01	0	65.97	1	-	-	-
United States	Palau	1987	Compact of Free Association	I	76.15	0	67.59	1	-	-	-
United States	Palau	1987	Compact of Free Association	I	74.69	0	73.04	1	-	-	-
France	New Caledonia	1987	Independence	I	59.1	0	1.7	0	0	stat	Kanaks (New Caledonians)
France	France	1988	Autonomy Statute	A	36.89	1	80	0	1	rat	Kanaks (New Caledonians)
Philippines	Mindanao	1989	Autonomy	A	-	NA	-	0	0	stat	Moros
USSR	Transnistria	1989	Separation from Moldovan SSR	A	78.43	1	95	0	0	sep	Trans-Dniester Slavs

Self-determination referendums, 1776–2015 (continued)

Country	Territory	Year	Issue description	Type of SD	Turn-out	SD passed	SD yes	Colo-nial	Agreed	Sub-type	SDM(s)
Philippines	Cordillera	1990	Autonomy	A	-	NA	-	0	0	stat	Igorots (Cordillerans)
United States	Palau	1990	Compact of Free Association	I	68.73	0	60.79	1	-	-	-
Namibia	Rehoboth Gebied	1990	Independence	I	-	1	84.1	0	0	sep	Basters
Yugoslavia	Krajina	1990	Autonomy	A	-	1	97.7	0	0	sep	Croatian Serbs
Yugoslavia	Slovenia	1990	Independence	I	93.31	1	94.69	0	0	sep	Slovenes
USSR	Crimea	1991	Restoration of the Crimean ASSR	A	81.37	1	93.26	0	1	rat	Crimean Russians
USSR	Lithuania	1991	Independence	I	84.52	1	93.24	0	0	sep	Lithuanians
USSR	Northeastern Estonia	1991	Independence	I	-	0	-	0	0	stat	Estonians
USSR	Estonia	1991	Independence	I	82.86	1	78.41	0	0	sep	Estonians
USSR	Latvia	1991	Independence	I	87.56	1	74.9	0	0	sep	Latvians
USSR	Kyrgyzstan	1991	Sovereignty	A	81.7	1	62.2	0	2	arb	Kyrgyz
USSR	Ukraine	1991	Sovereignty	A	83.48	1	81.69	0	2	arb	Ukrainians
USSR	USSR	1991	Preservation of the Soviet Union	I	80.03	0	22.15	0	0	stat	Armenians; Estonians; Georgians; Latvians; Lithuanians; Moldovans
USSR	Uzbekistan	1991	Sovereignty	A	95.5	1	94.9	0	2	arb	Uzbeks
USSR	Western Ukraine	1991	Independence	I	-	1	88	0	0	sep	Ukrainians
USSR	Georgia	1991	Independence	I	90.57	1	99.49	0	0	sep	Georgians
Yugoslavia	Serb-dominated areas of Croatia	1991	Merger with Krajina	T	-	1	99	0	0	sep	Croatian Serbs
Yugoslavia	Croatia	1991	Independence	I	83.56	1	93.24	0	0	sep	Croats
Yugoslavia	Macedonia	1991	Independence	I	75.74	1	96.46	0	0	sep	Macedonians
USSR	Armenia	1991	Independence	I	95.05	1	99.51	0	1	rat	Armenians
Yugoslavia	Kosovo	1991	Independence	I	87.01	1	99.98	0	0	sep	Kosovar Albanians

Self-determination referendums, 1776–2015 (continued)

Country	Territory	Year	Issue description	Type of SD	Turn-out	SD passed	SD yes	Colo-nial	Agreed	Sub-type	SDM(s)
Yugoslavia	Sandzak	1991	Autonomy	A	70.2	1	98.9	0	0	sep	Sandzak Muslims
USSR	Turkmenistan	1991	Independence	I	97.35	1	94.07	0	1	rat	Turkmen
Yugoslavia	Republika Srpska	1991	Merger with Serbia	T	85	1	98	0	0	sep	Bosnian Serbs
USSR	Berehove	1991	Autonomy	A	-	1	81.4	0	2	arb	Hungarians
USSR	Bolhrad	1991	Autonomy	A	-	1	83	0	2	arb	Bulgarians
USSR	Chernivtsi Oblast	1991	Economic autonomy	A	-	1	89.3	0	2	arb	Romanians
Moldova	Gagauzia	1991	Independence	I	85.1	1	95.4	0	0	sep	Gagauz
Moldova	Transnistria	1991	Independence	I	78	1	98	0	0	sep	Trans-Dniester Slavs
USSR	Ukraine	1991	Independence	I	84.18	1	92.26	0	2	arb	Ukrainians
USSR	Zakarpattya Oblast	1991	Autonomy	A	-	1	78	0	2	arb	Rusyns
Azerbaijan	Nagorno-Karabakh	1991	Independence	I	82.2	1	99.89	0	0	sep	Armenians
Azerbaijan	Azerbaijan	1991	Independence	I	82.2	1	99.76	0	1	rat	Azerbaijanis
USSR	Balkaria	1991	Separate Balkar republic	A	85	1	94.9	0	0	sep	Balkars
Uzbekistan	Uzbekistan	1991	Independence	I	94.14	1	98.26	0	1	rat	Uzbeks
USSR	Ingushetia	1991	Separation from Chechnya and return of Prigorodny raion	A	-	1	92.5	0	0	sep	Ingush
Macedonia	Western Macedonia	1992	Autonomy	A	-	1	99.9	0	0	sep	Macedonian Albanians
Georgia	South Ossetia	1992	Merger with Russia	T	97	1	99.75	0	0	sep	South Ossetians
Yugoslavia	Bosnia-Herzegovina	1992	Independence	I	63.4	1	99.4	0	0	sep	Bosniaks
Yugoslavia	Montenegro	1992	Independence	I	66.04	0	3.18	0	0	stat	Montenegrins
Yugoslavia	Presevo Valley	1992	Independence	I	97	1	99	0	0	sep	Kosovar Albanians
Russia	Tatarstan	1992	Sovereignty	A	82	1	62.23	0	0	sep	Tatars

Self-determination referendums, 1776–2015 (continued)

Country	Territory	Year	Issue description	Type of SD	Turn-out	SD passed	SD yes	Colo-nial	Agreed	Sub-type	SDM(s)
Russia	Karachay-Cherkessia	1992	Division of Karachay-Cherkessia	A	-	0	21.5	0	0	stat	Cherkess; Karachais
Canada	Northwest Territories	1992	Borders with Nunavut	A	56.09	1	54	0	1	rat	Inuit
Russia	Kumykia	1992	Autonomy	A	-	1	-	0	0	sep	Kumyks
Canada	Canada	1992	Charlottetown Accord	A	74.68	0	45.02	0	2	arb	Alberta; Cree; Haida; Innu; Inuit; Iroquois; Newfoundlanders; Quebecois; Westerners
Canada	Nunavut	1992	Creation of Nunavut	A	81	1	69	0	1	rat	Inuit
Ethiopia	Eritrea	1993	Independence	I	93.94	1	99.83	0	1	rat	Eritreans
Russia	Bashkortostan	1993	Economic autonomy	A	-	1	-	0	0	sep	Bashkir
Russia	Sverdlovsk Oblast	1993	Republican status	A	67	1	83	0	0	sep	Uralians
Russia	Vologda Oblast	1993	Republican status	A	-	1	-	0	0	sep	European Russians
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Republika Srpska	1993	Merger with Serbia	T	90	1	96	0	0	sep	Bosnian Serbs
Croatia	Krajina	1993	Merger with Republika Srpska	T	95.6	1	99.22	0	0	sep	Croatian Serbs
Estonia	Narva, Sillamae	1993	Autonomy	A	55	1	97	0	0	sep	Russians
United States	American Virgin Islands	1993	Relations with US	M	27.49	0	-	0	2	arb	American Virgin Islanders
United States	Palau	1993	Compact of Free Association	I	64.38	1	68.4	1	-	-	-
United States	Puerto Rico	1993	Relations with US	M	73.54	1	53.37	0	2	arb	Puerto Ricans
Netherlands	Curacao	1993	Relations with rest of NL Antilles and NL	M	56.8	0	18.4	1	-	-	-

Self-determination referendums, 1776–2015 (continued)

Country	Territory	Year	Issue description	Type of SD	Turn-out	SD passed	SD yes	Colo-nial	Agreed	Sub-type	SDM(s)
Russia	Tuva	1993	Constitution (autonomy)	A	-	1	62.2	0	1	rat	Tuvans
Ukraine	Crimea	1994	Autonomy	A	-	1	78.4	0	0	sep	Crimean Russians
Ukraine	Donetsk Oblast	1994	Federal Ukraine	A	72	1	79.6	0	0	sep	Donbas Russians
Australia	Christmas Island	1994	Enhanced autonomy or independence	M	-	1	100	0	0	sep	Christmas Islanders
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Republika Srpska	1994	Merger with Serbia	T	91.04	1	96.66	0	0	sep	Bosnian Serbs
Netherlands	Saba	1994	Relations with rest of NL Antilles and NL	M	-	0	10.1	1	-	-	-
Netherlands	Sint Eustatius	1994	Relations with rest of NL Antilles and NL	M	44	0	7	1	-	-	-
Netherlands	Sint Maarten	1994	Relations with rest of NL Antilles and NL	M	65.16	0	39.39	1	-	-	-
Netherlands	Bonaire	1994	Relations with rest of NL Antilles and NL	M	66.52	0	9.08	1	-	-	-
Russia	Balkaria	1994	Division of Kabardino-Balkaria	A	-	0	4	0	0	stat	Balkars
Moldova	Gagauzia	1995	Autonomy	A	-	NA	-	0	1	rat	Gagauz
United Kingdom	Bermuda	1995	Independence	I	58.76	0	25.88	1	-	-	-
Cameroon	Southwestern Cameroon	1995	Independence	I	66	1	99.97	0	0	sep	Westerners
Canada	Cree, Inuit, and Innu territories in Quebec	1995	Separation from Quebec	A	75	1	95	0	0	sep	Cree
Canada	Quebec	1995	Independence	I	93.52	0	49.42	0	2	arb	Quebecois
United States	Hawaii	1996	Native Hawaiian government	A	36	1	73.3	0	2	arb	Hawaiians
United Kingdom	Scotland	1997	Autonomy	A	60.43	1	74.29	0	1	rat	Scots
United Kingdom	Wales	1997	Autonomy	A	50.3	1	50.3	0	1	rat	Welsh

Self-determination referendums, 1776–2015 (continued)

Country	Territory	Year	Issue description	Type of SD	Turn-out	SD passed	SD yes	Colo-nial	Agreed	Sub-type	SDM(s)
Comoros	Anjouan	1997	Independence	I	94.82	1	99.68	0	0	sep	Anjouanese
Philippines	Cordillera	1998	Autonomy	A	-	NA	-	0	0	stat	Igorots (Cordillerans)
Ireland	Ireland	1998	Goodfriday Agreement	A	56.26	1	94.39	0	1	rat	Catholics in Northern Ireland
United Kingdom	Northern Ireland	1998	Goodfriday Agreement	A	81.13	1	71.12	0	1	rat	Catholics in Northern Ireland
St. Kitts and Nevis	Nevis	1998	Independence	I	57.99	0	61.83	0	2	arb	Nevisians
France	New Caledonia	1998	Noumea Accord	A	74.24	1	71.87	0	1	rat	Kanaks (New Caledonians)
United States	Puerto Rico	1998	Relations with US	M	71.11	1	53.26	0	2	arb	Puerto Ricans
Mexico	Mexico	1999	Autonomy for indigenous peoples	A	-	1	97.45	0	0	sep	Mayans
Indonesia	East Timor	1999	Independence	I	98.6	1	78.5	0	2	arb	East Timorese
Georgia	Abkhazia	1999	Constitution (independence)	I	87.6	1	97.7	0	0	sep	Abkhaz
Australia	Christmas Island	1999	Enhanced autonomy	A	65	1	62	0	0	sep	Christmas Islanders
Comoros	Anjouan	2000	Independence	I	-	1	94.47	0	0	sep	Anjouanese
Ecuador	Guayas	2000	Autonomy	A	85	1	95.8	0	0	sep	Guayas
Ecuador	Los Rios	2000	Autonomy	A	56.24	1	87.31	0	0	sep	Guayas
Netherlands	Sint Maarten	2000	Relations with rest of NL Antilles and NL	M	55.71	1	84.43	1	-	-	-
Ecuador	El Oro	2000	Autonomy	A	-	1	92.6	0	0	sep	Guayas
Ecuador	Manabi	2000	Autonomy	A	-	1	90	0	0	sep	Guayas
Ecuador	Sucumbios	2000	Autonomy	A	52.39	1	76.77	0	0	sep	Lowland Indigenous Peoples

Self-determination referendums, 1776–2015 (continued)

Country	Territory	Year	Issue description	Type of SD	Turn-out	SD passed	SD yes	Colo-nial	Agreed	Sub-type	SDM(s)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Herzeg-Bosna	2000	Separate Croat entity	A	71	1	99	0	0	sep	Bosnian Croats
Micronesia	Faichuk	2000	Separate state (constitution)	A	-	1	91.13	0	1	rat	Faichuk
Somalia	Somaliland	2001	Constitution (independence)	I	99.92	1	97.1	0	0	sep	Northern Somalis (Isaaqs & Others)
Philippines	Mindanao	2001	Expansion of autonomous region	A	-	NA	-	0	0	stat	Moros
Comoros	Comoros	2001	Constitution (federalization)	A	75.37	1	76.99	0	1	rat	Anjouanese
France	Corsica	2003	Autonomy	A	60.52	0	49	0	1	rat	Corsicans
France	Saint Barthelemy	2003	COM status	A	78.71	1	95.51	0	1	rat	St Barthelemys
France	Saint Martin	2003	COM status	A	44.18	1	76.17	0	1	rat	St Martins
Cyprus	Cyprus	2004	Annan plan	A	89.18	0	24.17	0	2	arb	Turkish Cypriots
Cyprus	Northern Cyprus	2004	Annan plan	A	84.35	0	64.96	0	2	arb	Turkish Cypriots
Netherlands	Bonaire	2004	Relations with rest of NL Antilles and NL	M	57.11	0	24.6	1	-	-	-
Netherlands	Saba	2004	Relations with rest of NL Antilles and NL	I	77.8	0	0.78	1	-	-	-
Netherlands	Curacao	2005	Relations with rest of NL Antilles and NL	M	55.04	1	72.67	1	-	-	-
Netherlands	Sint Eustatius	2005	Relations with rest of NL Antilles and NL	M	55.99	0	2.83	1	-	-	-
New Zealand	Tokelau	2006	Free association with New Zealand	I	94.69	0	60.07	1	-	-	-
Serbia and Montenegro	Montenegro	2006	Independence	I	86.49	1	55.49	0	2	arb	Montenegrins
Spain	Catalonia	2006	Enhanced autonomy	A	48.85	1	78.07	0	1	rat	Catalans

Self-determination referendums, 1776–2015 (continued)

Country	Territory	Year	Issue description	Type of SD	Turn-out	SD passed	SD yes	Colo-nial	Agreed	Sub-type	SDM(s)
Bolivia	Bolivia	2006	Autonomy	A	84.51	0	42.41	0	2	arb	Santa Cruz (Lowlanders); Quechua-Aymara
Moldova	Transnistria	2006	Merger with Russia	T	78.55	1	98.08	0	0	sep	Trans-Dniester Slavs
Georgia	South Ossetia	2006	Independence	I	94.56	1	99.88	0	0	sep	South Ossetians
Georgia	South Ossetia (Georgian-controlled part)	2006	Autonomy	A	96.49	1	94	0	0	stat	South Ossetians
Azerbaijan	Nagorno-Karabakh	2006	Constitution (independence)	I	87.02	1	99.29	0	0	sep	Armenians
Romania	Szerklerland	2006	Autonomy	A	52.99	1	99.47	0	0	sep	Magyars (Hungarians)
Spain	Andalusia	2007	Enhanced autonomy	A	36.28	1	90.22	0	1	rat	Andalusians
New Zealand	Tokelau	2007	Free association with New Zealand	I	88.34	0	64.45	1	-	-	-
Bolivia	Santa Cruz	2008	Autonomy	A	62.1	1	85.6	0	0	sep	Santa Cruz (Lowlanders)
Bolivia	Beni	2008	Autonomy	A	34.5	1	86	0	0	sep	Santa Cruz (Lowlanders)
Bolivia	Pando	2008	Autonomy	A	50	1	85	0	0	sep	Santa Cruz (Lowlanders)
Bolivia	Tarija	2008	Autonomy	A	-	1	80	0	0	sep	Santa Cruz (Lowlanders)
Denmark	Greenland	2008	Enhanced autonomy	A	71.96	1	76.22	0	1	rat	Greenlanders
Netherlands	Curacao	2009	Autonomy	A	67.09	1	51.99	1	-	-	-
Spain	552/947 Catalan municipalities	2009	Independence	I	20.5	NA	92.47	0	0	sep	Catalans

Self-determination referendums, 1776–2015 (continued)

Country	Territory	Year	Issue description	Type of SD	Turn-out	SD passed	SD yes	Colo-nial	Agreed	Sub-type	SDM(s)
Bolivia	Chuquisaca	2009	Departmental autonomy	A	-	1	84.63	0	1	rat	Quechua-Aymara
Bolivia	Cochabamba	2009	Departmental autonomy	A	-	1	80.34	0	1	rat	Quechua-Aymara
Bolivia	Gran Chaco Province	2009	Regional autonomy	A	-	1	80.45	0	1	rat	Lowland Indigenous
Bolivia	12 indigenous municipalities	2009	Local autonomy	A	-	NA	-	0	1	rat	Lowland Indigenous; Quechua-Aymara
Bolivia	La Paz	2009	Departmental autonomy	A	-	1	78.42	0	1	rat	Quechua-Aymara
Bolivia	Oruro	2009	Departmental autonomy	A	-	1	75.69	0	1	rat	Quechua-Aymara
Bolivia	Potosi	2009	Departmental autonomy	A	-	1	81.65	0	1	rat	Quechua-Aymara
France	French Guiana	2010	COM status	A	48.16	0	29.78	0	1	rat	French Guianans
France	Martinique	2010	COM status	A	55.32	0	20.69	0	1	rat	Martinique Islanders
Sudan	South Sudan	2011	Independence	I	97.58	1	98.83	0	2	arb	Southerners
United Kingdom	Wales	2011	Enhanced autonomy	A	35.63	1	63.49	0	1	rat	Welsh
Kosovo	Northern Kosovo	2012	Merger with Serbia	T	75.29	1	99.74	0	0	sep	Serbs
United States	Puerto Rico	2012	Relations with US	I	78.19	0	29.44	0	2	arb	Puerto Ricans
Sudan	Abyei	2013	Merger with Sudan	T	97.93	1	99.98	0	0	sep	-
Moldova	Gagauzia	2014	Independence	I	70.03	1	98.09	0	0	sep	-
Ukraine	Crimea	2014	Merger with Russia	T	83.01	1	97.47	0	0	sep	-
Ukraine	Sevastopol	2014	Merger with Russia	T	89.5	1	96.59	0	0	sep	-
Ukraine	Donetsk Oblast	2014	Merger with Russia	T	74.87	1	89.79	0	0	sep	-
Ukraine	Luhansk Oblast	2014	Merger with Russia	T	75	1	96.2	0	0	sep	-
United Kingdom	Scotland	2014	Independence	I	84.59	0	44.7	0	2	arb	-
Spain	Catalonia	2014	Independence	I	39	1	81	0	0	sep	-

Self-determination referendums, 1776–2015 (continued)

Country	Territory	Year	Issue description	Type of SD	Turn-out	SD passed	SD yes	Colo-nial	Agreed	Sub-type	SDM(s)
Netherlands	Sint Eustatius	2014	Relations with NL	M	45.4	0	65.97	0	2	arb	-
Netherlands	Bonaire	2015	Autonomy	A	61.59	1	65.55	0	2	arb	-

Note: 'Country' gives the internationally recognized country in which the SD referendum took place. 'Territory' gives the territorial unit that is voting on SD and 'Year' the calendar year. 'Issue description' gives a short description of the referendum issue. 'Type of SD' gives the type of self-rule at stake in the SD referendum whereby 'A' denotes autonomy, 'I' Independence, 'T' the transfer of a territory from one country to another (transfers to the cultural motherland), and 'M' multiple, which applies if a referendum has multiple options and, for example, both autonomy and independence are at stake. 'Turnout' gives the reported rate of electoral participation. 'SD passed' denotes whether an SD referendum turned out in favor of increased self-rule. Some 'SD passed' values are denoted with 'NA' because different regions could decide individually whether they should get autonomy. Mindanao (1989) constitutes a case in point; a total of 13 provinces could decide individually whether they want to form part of the autonomous region of Mindanao. While 4 voted in favor, the remaining 9 voted against; as a result, 'SD passed' is undefined. 'SD yes share' gives the vote share in favor of increased self-rule (combining the respective yes shares if there are multiple options implying increased self-rule). 'Colonial' is a binary denoting whether the territorial unit that is directly affected by the SD referendum constitutes a colony. 'Agreed' constitutes a binary denoting whether the SD referendum was agreed by the state and the self-determination movement (SDM) in question, and 'Sub-type' gives the sub-type of agreed or unilateral SD referendum whereby 'rat' refers to an agreed ratification referendum, 'arb' to an agreed arbitration referendum, 'sep' to a separatist-sponsored unilateral referendum, and 'stat' to a state-sponsored unilateral referendum. Finally, 'SDM(s)' gives the name of the name(s) self-determination movement(s) to which an SD referendum was assigned; in combination with 'Country', this gives the SD dispute to which an SD referendum was assigned in the SDM-Eurasia dataset. 'Agreed', 'Sub-type', and 'SDM(s)' are only available for noncolonial SD referendums from 1945 onwards. '-' denotes missing values.

Appendix B

List of All Noncolonial Self-Determination Disputes, 1945–2012

Table B.1: Noncolonial self-determination disputes, 1945–2012

State	SDM	Start	End	Disc. act.	Violent	Eurasia
Afghanistan	Hazaras	1960	Ongoing	0	1	1
Afghanistan	Tajiks	1979	2001	1	1	1
Afghanistan	Uzbeks	1990	Ongoing	0	1	1
Albania	Epirote Greeks	1990	Ongoing	0	0	1
Algeria	Berbers (Kabyles)	1963	Ongoing	0	1	0
Angola	Bakongo	1990	2012	0	1	0
Angola	Cabindans	1975	Ongoing	0	1	0
Antigua & Barbuda	Barbudans	1981	Ongoing	0	0	0
Argentina	Indigenous Peoples	1970	Ongoing	0	0	0
Australia	Aborigines	1945	Ongoing	0	0	0
Australia	Christmas Islanders	1981	2009	0	0	0
Australia	New Englanders	1948	1977	0	0	0
Australia	Norfolk Islanders	1986	Ongoing	0	0	0
Australia	Torres Strait Islanders	1976	Ongoing	0	0	0
Australia	Western Australians	1974	Ongoing	0	0	0
Austria	Vorarlbergers	1979	2004	0	0	1
Azerbaijan	Armenians	1991	Ongoing	0	1	1
Azerbaijan	Kurds	1992	1992	0	0	1
Azerbaijan	Lezgins	1991	2004	0	0	1
Azerbaijan	Talysh	1993	1993	0	0	1
Bangladesh	Chittagong Hills People	1972	Ongoing	0	1	1
Bangladesh	Hindus	1985	Ongoing	0	0	1
Belgium	Flemish	1954	Ongoing	0	0	1
Belgium	Germans	1970	Ongoing	0	0	1
Belgium	Walloons	1964	Ongoing	0	0	1

Noncolonial self-determination disputes, 1945–2012 (continued)

State	SDM	Start	End	Disc. act.	Violent	Eurasia
Belize	Mayans	1995	Ongoing	0	0	0
Bolivia	Lowland Indigenous	1982	Ongoing	0	0	0
Bolivia	Quechua-Aymara	1952	Ongoing	0	1	0
Bolivia	Santa Cruz (Lowlanders)	2003	Ongoing	0	0	0
Bosnia	Bihacs (Western Bosniaks)	1993	1995	0	1	1
Bosnia	Bosnian Croats	1992	Ongoing	0	1	1
Bosnia	Bosnian Serbs	1992	Ongoing	0	1	1
Botswana	San Bushmen	1995	Ongoing	0	0	0
Brazil	Geralians	1990	2003	0	0	0
Brazil	Indigenous Peoples	1970	Ongoing	0	1	0
Cameroon	Bakassi	2008	Ongoing	0	0	0
Cameroon	Bamileke	1960	2008	1	1	0
Cameroon	Westerners	1980	Ongoing	0	0	0
Canada	Acadians	1972	1986	0	0	0
Canada	Alberta	1982	Ongoing	0	0	0
Canada	Cree	1974	Ongoing	0	0	0
Canada	Dene	1975	Ongoing	0	0	0
Canada	Haida	1980	Ongoing	0	0	0
Canada	Innu	1977	Ongoing	0	0	0
Canada	Inuit	1963	1999	0	0	0
Canada	Iroquois	1977	Ongoing	0	0	0
Canada	Newfoundlanders	1983	1993	0	0	0
Canada	Quebecois	1945	Ongoing	0	0	0
Canada	Westerners	1974	2001	0	0	0
Chad	Northerners	1966	1979	0	1	0
Chad	Southerners	1980	2011	0	1	0
Chile	Easter Islanders (Rapa Nui)	1994	Ongoing	0	0	0
Chile	Mapuche (Araucanians)	1978	Ongoing	0	0	0
China	Eastern Mongols	1946	1946	0	1	1
China	Hui (Dungans)	1953	1958	0	0	1
China	Southern Mongols	1945	Ongoing	1	1	1
China	Tibetans	1945	Ongoing	0	1	1
China	Uyghurs	1945	Ongoing	0	1	1
Colombia	Cacarica	2000	Ongoing	0	0	0
Colombia	Cumbales, Paez, Guambiano, and Nasa	1980	Ongoing	0	0	0
Colombia	Raizals	1960	Ongoing	0	0	0
Comoros	Anjouanese	1996	Ongoing	0	1	0
Congo-Zaire	Bakongo	1969	Ongoing	0	1	0
Congo-Zaire	Katangans (Lunda and Yeke)	1960	Ongoing	0	1	0
Congo-Zaire	Luba	1960	1963	0	1	0
Cote d'Ivoire	Agni	1960	2011	1	0	0
Croatia	Croatian Serbs	1991	Ongoing	0	1	1
Croatia	Istrians	1991	Ongoing	0	0	1
Cyprus	Turkish Cypriots	1961	Ongoing	0	1	1
Czech Republic	Moravians	1993	Ongoing	0	0	1
Czechoslovakia	Czechs	1992	1992	0	0	1
Czechoslovakia	Hungarians	1989	1992	0	0	1
Czechoslovakia	Moravians	1968	1992	0	0	1

Noncolonial self-determination disputes, 1945–2012 (continued)

State	SDM	Start	End	Disc. act.	Violent	Eurasia
Czechoslovakia	Slovaks	1945	1992	1	0	1
Denmark	Faroese	1945	Ongoing	0	0	1
Denmark	Greenlanders	1971	Ongoing	0	0	1
Djibouti	Afars	1977	Ongoing	0	1	0
Ecuador	Guayas	1999	Ongoing	0	0	0
Ecuador	Highland Indigenous Peoples	1972	Ongoing	0	0	0
Ecuador	Lowland Indigenous Peoples	1964	Ongoing	0	0	0
El Salvador	Indigenous Peoples	1959	Ongoing	0	0	0
Equatorial Guinea	Bubis	1989	Ongoing	0	0	0
Eritrea	Afars	1993	Ongoing	0	0	0
Estonia	Russians	1991	2003	0	0	1
Ethiopia	Afars	1975	Ongoing	0	1	0
Ethiopia	Anuaks	1979	Ongoing	0	1	0
Ethiopia	Benishangul	1995	Ongoing	0	1	0
Ethiopia	Eritreans	1958	1993	0	1	0
Ethiopia	Oromos	1973	Ongoing	0	1	0
Ethiopia	Sidama	1978	Ongoing	1	1	0
Ethiopia	Tigreans	1975	1991	0	1	0
Ethiopia	Western Somalis	1948	Ongoing	0	1	0
Finland	Alanders	1990	Ongoing	0	0	1
Finland	Sami (Lapps)	1973	Ongoing	0	0	1
France	Alsatians	1969	Ongoing	0	0	1
France	Basques	1963	Ongoing	0	0	1
France	Bretons	1957	Ongoing	0	0	1
France	Corsicans	1967	Ongoing	0	1	1
France	French Guianans	1956	Ongoing	0	0	1
France	French Polynesians (Tahitians)	1958	Ongoing	0	0	1
France	Guadeloupe Islanders	1965	Ongoing	0	0	1
France	Kanaks (New Caledonians)	1958	Ongoing	0	1	1
France	Martinique Islanders	1957	Ongoing	0	0	1
France	Normans	1969	Ongoing	0	0	1
France	Occitans	1959	Ongoing	0	0	1
France	Reunion Islanders	1959	Ongoing	0	0	1
France	Savoyards	1946	Ongoing	1	0	1
France	St Barthelemys	1996	2007	0	0	1
France	St Martins	1996	2007	0	0	1
Georgia	Abkhaz	1991	Ongoing	0	1	1
Georgia	Ajars	1991	Ongoing	0	1	1
Georgia	Armenians	1991	Ongoing	0	0	1
Georgia	South Ossetians	1991	Ongoing	0	1	1
Germany	Badeners	1952	1980	0	0	1
Germany	Bavarians	1949	Ongoing	0	0	1
Germany	Franconians	1989	Ongoing	0	0	1
Germany	Lusatian Sorbs	1990	2000	0	0	1
Germany	Oldenburgers	1956	1985	0	0	1
Germany	Schaumburg-Lippeners	1956	1985	0	0	1
Ghana	Ashanti, Brong, and Ahafo	1957	2005	1	0	0
Ghana	Ewes	1957	1987	0	0	0

Noncolonial self-determination disputes, 1945–2012 (continued)

State	SDM	Start	End	Disc. act.	Violent	Eurasia
Guatemala	Mayans	1991	Ongoing	0	0	0
Honduras	Black Karibs	1979	Ongoing	0	0	0
Honduras	Miskitos	1976	Ongoing	0	0	0
India	Achiks (Garos)	1992	Ongoing	0	1	1
India	Assamese	1979	Ongoing	0	1	1
India	Bodos	1967	Ongoing	0	1	1
India	Gorkhas (Gurkhas)	1947	Ongoing	0	1	1
India	Hynniewtreps (Khasi-Jaintia)	1992	Ongoing	0	1	1
India	Jharkhandis	1947	2000	0	1	1
India	Kashmiri Buddhist Ladakhis	1949	Ongoing	0	0	1
India	Kashmiri Hindus	1952	Ongoing	0	0	1
India	Kashmiri Muslims	1947	Ongoing	0	1	1
India	Keralans	1949	1956	0	0	1
India	Kodavas (Coorgs)	1991	Ongoing	0	0	1
India	Kuki	1960	Ongoing	0	1	1
India	Manipuri	1949	Ongoing	0	1	1
India	Masas (Dimasas)	1980	Ongoing	0	1	1
India	Meghalayans	1947	1972	0	0	1
India	Mikirs (Karbi)	1947	Ongoing	0	0	1
India	Mizos	1947	1986	0	1	1
India	Nagas	1947	Ongoing	0	1	1
India	Pangals	1993	Ongoing	0	1	1
India	Rabhas	1980	Ongoing	0	0	1
India	Rajbangsis	1991	Ongoing	0	1	1
India	Reang (Bru)	1994	Ongoing	0	0	1
India	Santhals (Assam)	1996	Ongoing	0	1	1
India	Sikhs	1947	Ongoing	0	1	1
India	Sikkimese	1981	2004	0	0	1
India	Tamils	1947	1963	0	0	1
India	Telanganas	1969	Ongoing	1	1	1
India	Telugus	1950	1956	0	0	1
India	Tripuris	1949	Ongoing	0	1	1
India	Uttarakhandis	1976	2000	0	0	1
Indonesia	Acehnese	1950	2005	0	1	1
Indonesia	Balinese	1999	Ongoing	0	0	1
Indonesia	East Timorese	1975	2002	0	1	1
Indonesia	Indigenous Peoples	1988	Ongoing	0	0	1
Indonesia	Melayus	1950	Ongoing	1	0	1
Indonesia	Papuans	1963	Ongoing	0	1	1
Indonesia	South Moluccans (Ambonese)	1950	Ongoing	1	1	1
Indonesia	South Sulawesis	1950	Ongoing	0	1	1
Iran	Arabs (Arabistanis)	1979	Ongoing	1	1	0
Iran	Azerbaijanis	1945	Ongoing	1	1	0
Iran	Baluchis	1973	Ongoing	0	1	0
Iran	Gilakis	1975	1985	0	0	0
Iran	Kurds	1945	Ongoing	0	1	0
Iran	Turkmen	1979	Ongoing	1	1	0
Iraq	Assyrians	1976	Ongoing	0	0	0
Iraq	Kurds	1946	Ongoing	0	1	0
Iraq	Shiites	2005	Ongoing	0	0	0

Noncolonial self-determination disputes, 1945–2012 (continued)

State	SDM	Start	End	Disc. act.	Violent	Eurasia
Iraq	Turkmen	1988	Ongoing	0	0	0
Israel	Palestinians	1963	Ongoing	0	1	0
Italy	Emilians	1994	Ongoing	0	0	1
Italy	Friuli	1966	Ongoing	0	0	1
Italy	Ladins	1945	Ongoing	0	0	1
Italy	Ligurians	1945	Ongoing	0	0	1
Italy	Lombards	1982	Ongoing	0	0	1
Italy	Piedmontese	1977	Ongoing	0	0	1
Italy	Romanians	1991	Ongoing	0	0	1
Italy	Sardinians	1945	Ongoing	0	0	1
Italy	Sicilians	1945	Ongoing	0	0	1
Italy	South Italians	1996	Ongoing	0	0	1
Italy	South Tyroleans	1945	Ongoing	0	0	1
Italy	Trentini	1945	Ongoing	0	0	1
Italy	Triestines	1975	Ongoing	0	0	1
Italy	Tuscans	1987	Ongoing	0	0	1
Italy	Valdaostans	1945	Ongoing	0	0	1
Italy	Venetians	1979	Ongoing	0	0	1
Japan	Ainu	1984	2012	0	0	1
Japan	Okinawans	1972	Ongoing	0	0	1
Kazakhstan	Cossacks	1991	1995	0	0	1
Kazakhstan	Russians	1992	1999	0	0	1
Kenya	Maasai	1963	Ongoing	0	0	0
Kenya	Mombasa	1999	Ongoing	0	0	0
Kenya	Somalis	1963	1967	0	1	0
Kiribati	Banabans	1979	1983	0	0	0
Kosovo	Serbs	2008	Ongoing	0	0	1
Kyrgyzstan	Kyrgyz Uzbeks	1991	2000	0	0	1
Laos	Hmong	1953	Ongoing	0	1	1
Libya	Cyrenaicans	2012	Ongoing	0	0	0
Libya	Toubou	2011	Ongoing	0	0	0
Lithuania	Lithuanian Poles	1991	Ongoing	0	0	1
Macedonia	Macedonian Albanians	1991	Ongoing	0	1	1
Malaysia	Ibans	1963	Ongoing	0	0	1
Malaysia	Kadazan	1963	Ongoing	0	0	1
Mali	Tuaregs	1962	Ongoing	1	1	0
Mauritania	Kewris	1983	Ongoing	0	1	0
Mauritania	Saharawis	1975	1979	0	1	0
Mexico	Mayans	1987	Ongoing	0	1	0
Mexico	Other Indigenous Peoples	1945	Ongoing	0	1	0
Mexico	Zapotecs	1973	Ongoing	0	0	0
Micronesia	Faichuk	1986	Ongoing	0	0	0
Moldova	Gagauz	1991	Ongoing	0	1	1
Moldova	Trans-Dniester Slavs	1991	Ongoing	0	1	1
Montenegro	Sandzak Muslims	2006	Ongoing	0	0	1
Morocco	Riffians	1958	Ongoing	1	1	0
Morocco	Saharawis	1975	Ongoing	0	1	0
Myanmar	Buddhist Arakanese	1948	1980	0	1	1
Myanmar	Kachins	1948	Ongoing	0	1	1
Myanmar	Karenni (Kayah)	1948	Ongoing	0	1	1
Myanmar	Karens	1948	Ongoing	0	1	1
Myanmar	Kokang	1958	Ongoing	0	1	1

Noncolonial self-determination disputes, 1945–2012 (continued)

State	SDM	Start	End	Disc. act.	Violent	Eurasia
Myanmar	Lahu	1958	Ongoing	0	1	1
Myanmar	Mons	1948	Ongoing	0	1	1
Myanmar	Nagas	1949	Ongoing	0	1	1
Myanmar	Pa-O	1949	Ongoing	0	1	1
Myanmar	Palaung	1963	Ongoing	0	1	1
Myanmar	Rohingyas (Arakanese)	1948	Ongoing	0	1	1
Myanmar	Shan	1948	Ongoing	0	1	1
Myanmar	Wa	1972	Ongoing	0	1	1
Myanmar	Zomi (Chin)	1988	Ongoing	0	1	1
Namibia	Basters	1990	Ongoing	0	0	0
Namibia	East Caprivians	1990	Ongoing	0	1	0
Nepal	Limbus	1986	Ongoing	0	0	1
Nepal	Madhesi (Terai People)	1951	Ongoing	1	0	1
Nepal	Other Adivasis/Janajatis	1990	Ongoing	0	0	1
Nepal	Rais	1992	Ongoing	0	0	1
Netherlands	Frisians	1962	Ongoing	0	0	1
New Zealand	Maoris	1962	Ongoing	0	0	0
Nicaragua	Miskitos	1974	Ongoing	0	1	0
Nicaragua	Sumos (Mayangnas)	1974	Ongoing	0	1	0
Niger	Toubou	1994	Ongoing	0	1	0
Niger	Tuaregs	1988	Ongoing	0	1	0
Nigeria	Bakassi	2006	2008	0	0	0
Nigeria	Edo	1960	1991	1	0	0
Nigeria	Hausa and Fulani	1966	Ongoing	1	0	0
Nigeria	Ibibios	1960	1986	0	0	0
Nigeria	Ibos (Biafrans)	1966	Ongoing	1	1	0
Nigeria	Ijaw	1966	Ongoing	1	1	0
Nigeria	Itsekiris	1987	Ongoing	0	0	0
Nigeria	Kanuri	1976	1976	0	0	0
Nigeria	Northerners	2002	Ongoing	0	1	0
Nigeria	Ogoni	1990	Ongoing	0	0	0
Nigeria	Oron	1999	Ongoing	0	0	0
Nigeria	Tiv	1960	1976	0	0	0
Nigeria	Urhobos	1998	Ongoing	0	0	0
Nigeria	Yorubas	1966	Ongoing	1	1	0
Norway	Sami (Lapps)	1973	Ongoing	0	0	1
Oman	Dhofari	1963	1975	0	1	0
Pakistan	Baluchis	1947	Ongoing	0	1	1
Pakistan	Bengalis	1949	1971	0	1	1
Pakistan	Pashtuns (Pathans)	1947	Ongoing	0	1	1
Pakistan	Saraikis (Bahawalpuris)	1969	Ongoing	0	0	1
Pakistan	Sindhis	1967	Ongoing	0	0	1
Panama	Embera-Wounaan	1968	Ongoing	0	0	0
Panama	Kuna	1945	Ongoing	0	0	0
Panama	Ngoebe-Bugle	1945	Ongoing	0	0	0
Papua New Guinea	Bougainvilleans	1975	Ongoing	0	1	0
Paraguay	Indigenous Peoples	1975	Ongoing	0	0	0
Peru	Loretos	1998	Ongoing	0	0	0
Peru	Lowland Indigenous Peoples	1980	Ongoing	0	0	0
Peru	Quechua-Aymara	2002	Ongoing	0	0	0
Philippines	Igorots (Cordillerans)	1984	Ongoing	0	1	1

Noncolonial self-determination disputes, 1945–2012 (continued)

State	SDM	Start	End	Disc. act.	Violent	Eurasia
Philippines	Moros	1968	Ongoing	0	1	1
Poland	Silesians	1990	Ongoing	0	0	1
Portugal	Azoreans	1975	1990	0	0	1
Portugal	Madeirans	1974	2000	0	0	1
Romania	Magyars (Hungarians)	1990	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Abaza	1992	2010	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Abkhaz	1977	1991	1	1	1
Russia (USSR)	Adyghe	1991	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Ajars	1988	1991	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Altaians	1989	2000	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Armenians	1966	1991	0	1	1
Russia (USSR)	Avars	1990	2000	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Azerbaijanis	1989	1991	0	1	1
Russia (USSR)	Balkars	1989	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Bashkir	1989	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Belarussians	1987	1991	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Buryats	1990	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Chechens	1989	Ongoing	0	1	1
Russia (USSR)	Cherkess	1991	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Chukots	1990	2001	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Chuvash (Chavash)	1989	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Crimean Russians	1989	1991	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Crimean Tatars	1957	1991	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Dagestanis	1991	Ongoing	0	1	1
Russia (USSR)	Don Cossacks	1993	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Estonians	1945	1991	1	1	1
Russia (USSR)	European Russians	1993	2003	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Evenks	1989	2012	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Far Eastern Slavs	1991	2007	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Gagauz	1989	1991	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Georgians	1987	1991	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Ingrians	1990	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Ingush	1970	Ongoing	0	1	1
Russia (USSR)	Kabards	1991	2002	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Kaliningrad Slavs	1990	2010	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Kalmyks	1990	2008	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Karachais	1989	2011	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Karakalpaks	1989	1991	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Karelians	1990	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Kazakhs	1988	1991	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Khakass	1989	1991	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Khants and Mansi	1990	1997	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Komi	1990	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Komi-Permyaks	1989	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Koryaks and Itelmen	1990	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Kuban Cossacks	1991	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Kumyks	1989	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Kyrgyz	1989	1991	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Kyrgyz Uzbeks	1989	1991	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Latvians	1945	1991	1	1	1
Russia (USSR)	Lezgins	1990	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Lithuanian Poles	1989	1991	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Lithuanians	1945	1991	1	1	1

Noncolonial self-determination disputes, 1945–2012 (continued)

State	SDM	Start	End	Disc. act.	Violent	Eurasia
Russia (USSR)	Mari	1989	2000	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Moldovans	1969	1991	1	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Mordvins	1989	1994	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Nenets	1990	2011	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Nogai	1989	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	North Ossetians	1990	2005	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Pamiri Tajiks	1989	1991	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Rusyns	1990	1991	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Shapsugs	1990	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Siberians	1988	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	South Ossetians	1988	1991	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Tajiks	1990	1991	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Tatars	1988	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Terek Cossacks	1991	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Trans-Dniester Slavs	1989	1991	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Turkmen	1989	1991	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Tuvans	1989	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Udmurts	1990	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Ukrainians	1945	1991	1	1	1
Russia (USSR)	Uralians	1991	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Uzbek Tajiks	1988	1991	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Uzbeks	1988	1991	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Veps	1989	2001	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Volga Germans	1964	Ongoing	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Western Ukrainians	1989	1991	0	0	1
Russia (USSR)	Yakuts (Sakhas)	1990	Ongoing	0	0	1
Senegal	Casamancais	1982	Ongoing	0	1	0
Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Bosniaks	1990	1992	0	0	1
Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Bosnian Croats	1991	1992	0	0	1
Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Bosnian Serbs	1991	1992	0	1	1
Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Croatian Serbs	1989	1991	0	0	1
Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Croats	1967	1991	1	1	1
Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Hungarians	1992	Ongoing	0	0	1
Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Istrians	1990	1991	0	0	1
Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Kosovar Albanians	1945	Ongoing	0	1	1
Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Macedonian Albanians	1990	1991	0	0	1
Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Macedonians	1990	1991	0	0	1
Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Montenegrins	1990	2006	0	0	1
Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Sandzak Muslims	1990	Ongoing	0	0	1
Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Slovenes	1968	1991	1	1	1
Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Vojvodina Serbs	1990	Ongoing	0	0	1
Slovakia	Hungarians	1993	Ongoing	0	0	1
Solomon Islands	Gwales (Guadalcanalese)	1978	Ongoing	0	1	0
Solomon Islands	Makiras	2000	Ongoing	0	0	0
Solomon Islands	Malaitans	1999	Ongoing	0	1	0
Solomon Islands	Rennell-Bellonas	2000	Ongoing	0	0	0
Solomon Islands	Temotus	2000	Ongoing	0	0	0
Solomon Islands	Westerners	1978	Ongoing	1	0	0
Somalia	Northern Somalis (Isaaqs & Others)	1991	Ongoing	0	1	0
Somalia	Puntland Darods	1998	Ongoing	0	0	0
South Africa	Afrikaners	2000	Ongoing	0	0	0

Noncolonial self-determination disputes, 1945–2012 (continued)

State	SDM	Start	End	Disc. act.	Violent	Eurasia
South Africa	East Caprivians	1989	1990	0	0	0
South Africa	Khoisans	1996	Ongoing	0	0	0
South Africa	Namibians	1959	1990	0	1	0
South Africa	Ndebele	1982	1986	0	1	0
South Africa	Tswana	1973	1994	0	0	0
South Africa	Xhosa	1963	1994	0	0	0
South Africa	Zulus	1970	2007	0	1	0
South Vietnam	Chams	1954	1975	0	1	1
South Vietnam	Khmer Krom	1955	1975	0	1	1
South Vietnam	Montagnards	1958	1975	0	1	1
Spain	Alavese	1989	2005	0	0	1
Spain	Andalusians	1976	Ongoing	0	0	1
Spain	Aragonese	1978	Ongoing	0	0	1
Spain	Aranese	1978	Ongoing	0	0	1
Spain	Asturians	1976	Ongoing	0	0	1
Spain	Basques	1945	Ongoing	0	1	1
Spain	Canarians	1961	Ongoing	0	0	1
Spain	Cantabrians	1976	Ongoing	0	0	1
Spain	Catalans	1975	Ongoing	0	0	1
Spain	Galicians	1963	Ongoing	0	0	1
Spain	Leonese	1980	Ongoing	0	0	1
Spain	Navarrians	1977	Ongoing	0	0	1
Sri Lanka	Muslims	1981	Ongoing	0	0	1
Sri Lanka	Tamils	1949	Ongoing	0	1	1
St. Kitts and Nevis	Nevisians	1983	Ongoing	0	0	0
Sudan	Easterners	1958	Ongoing	0	1	0
Sudan	Fur	1960	Ongoing	1	1	0
Sudan	Southerners	1956	Ongoing	0	1	0
Suriname	Indigenous Peoples	1976	Ongoing	0	0	0
Sweden	Sami (Lapps)	1973	Ongoing	0	0	1
Sweden	Scanians	1979	Ongoing	0	0	1
Switzerland	Jurassians	1947	Ongoing	0	0	1
Syria	Alawites (Alawi)	1946	1954	0	0	0
Syria	Assyrians	1976	Ongoing	0	0	0
Syria	Druze	1946	1954	0	0	0
Syria	Kurds	1957	Ongoing	0	0	0
Taiwan	Indigenous Taiwanese	1988	Ongoing	0	0	1
Tajikistan	Pamiri Tajiks	1991	1993	0	1	1
Tajikistan	Uzbeks	1991	1998	0	1	1
Tanzania	Zanzibaris	1964	Ongoing	0	0	0
Thailand	Muslims (Malays or Pattani)	1947	Ongoing	0	1	1
Thailand	Northern Hill Tribes	1997	Ongoing	0	0	1
Trinidad & Tobago	Tobagonians	1970	Ongoing	0	0	0
Turkey	Kurds	1965	Ongoing	0	1	0
Uganda	Baganda	1995	Ongoing	0	0	0
Uganda	Banyala	2009	Ongoing	0	0	0
Uganda	Banyankole	1962	Ongoing	1	0	0
Uganda	Banyoro	1962	Ongoing	1	0	0
Uganda	Batoro	1962	1972	0	0	0
Uganda	Ruwenzoris	1962	2008	0	1	0
Ukraine	Bulgarians	1991	2001	0	0	1
Ukraine	Crimean Russians	1991	Ongoing	0	0	1

Noncolonial self-determination disputes, 1945–2012 (continued)

State	SDM	Start	End	Disc. act.	Violent	Eurasia
Ukraine	Crimean Tatars	1991	Ongoing	0	0	1
Ukraine	Donbas Russians	1991	2004	0	0	1
Ukraine	Hungarians	1991	Ongoing	0	0	1
Ukraine	Romanians	1991	2001	0	0	1
Ukraine	Rusyns	1991	2003	0	0	1
Ukraine	Western Ukrainians	1991	Ongoing	0	0	1
United Kingdom	Catholics in Northern Ireland	1948	Ongoing	0	1	1
United Kingdom	Cornish	1973	Ongoing	0	0	1
United Kingdom	English	1974	Ongoing	1	0	1
United Kingdom	Orkney Islanders	1975	Ongoing	0	0	1
United Kingdom	Scots	1945	Ongoing	0	0	1
United Kingdom	Shetland Islanders	1975	Ongoing	0	0	1
United Kingdom	Welsh	1945	Ongoing	0	0	1
United States	Africans	1968	1984	0	0	0
United States	Alaskans	1984	Ongoing	0	0	0
United States	American Virgin Islanders	1972	Ongoing	0	0	0
United States	Chamorros	1972	Ongoing	0	0	0
United States	Cherokee	1948	Ongoing	0	0	0
United States	Chicanos	1969	Ongoing	0	0	0
United States	Dine (Navajo)	1977	Ongoing	0	0	0
United States	Hawaiians	1974	Ongoing	0	0	0
United States	Iroquois	1977	Ongoing	0	0	0
United States	Lakota (Sioux)	1964	Ongoing	0	0	0
United States	Pueblos	1945	Ongoing	0	0	0
United States	Puerto Ricans	1952	Ongoing	0	0	0
United States	Southerners	1994	Ongoing	0	0	0
United States	St. Croix	2003	Ongoing	0	0	0
United States	Texans	1995	Ongoing	0	0	0
United States	Vermont	2003	Ongoing	0	0	0
Uzbekistan	Karakalpaks	1991	Ongoing	0	0	1
Uzbekistan	Uzbek Tajiks	1991	2002	0	0	1
Vanuatu	Vemerans	1980	Ongoing	0	0	0
Venezuela	Indigenous Peoples	1972	Ongoing	0	0	0
Venezuela	Zulians	2000	Ongoing	0	0	0
Vietnam	Chams	1975	1984	0	1	1
Vietnam	Khmer Krom	1975	Ongoing	0	1	1
Vietnam	Montagnards	1975	Ongoing	1	1	1
Yemen	South Yemenis	1990	Ongoing	0	1	0
Zambia	Lozi (Barotse)	1988	Ongoing	0	0	0
Zimbabwe	Ndebele	1987	Ongoing	0	0	0

Note: 'State' gives the internationally recognized state in which the SD dispute took place. 'SDM' gives the name of the self-determination movement that made claims for increased self-rule, which is tantamount to the name of the ethnic group on whose behalf the movement claimed self-rule. 'Start' gives the first year the dispute was active in the 1945–2012 period and 'End' the last year of activity. Disputes that were ongoing by 2012 are denoted with 'Ongoing'. 'Disc. act.' is a binary flagging disputes with discontinuous activity, that is, disputes that were inactive for some of the years in-between the first and last year of activity. 'Violent' is a binary that flags disputes that involved separatist armed conflict. Finally, 'Eurasia' is a binary denoting whether a dispute is part of the Eurasian sample.

Appendix C

Curriculum Vitae

(see next page)

CURRICULUM VITAE

Micha Germann
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EDUCATION

08/2013 –	ETH Zurich, PhD in Political Science Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Lars-Erik Cederman
09/2012 – 07/2013	University of Zurich, PhD in Political Science Continued at ETH Zurich (see above)
09/2009 – 02/2012	University of Zurich, Master of Arts in Social Sciences Major: Political Science, Minor: Public Law Weighted overall grade: 5.8 Master thesis: *'Economic Globalization and Human Rights: Towards a More Differentiated Picture. An Empirical Analysis of a Conditional Framework*', Grade: 6
10/2006 – 09/2009	University of Zurich, Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences Major: Political Science, Minor: Public Law Weighted overall grade: 5.5 Bachelor thesis: *'British Petroleum, Royal Dutch Shell und die EU ETS-Richtlinie'* (British Petroleum, Royal Dutch Shell and the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme), Grade: 6
08/2000 – 07/2005	Kantonsschule Schaffhausen (Cantonal Grammar School of Schaffhausen), Typus S (specialization in classical and modern languages)

FURTHER EDUCATION

01/2016 – 06/2016	Visiting scholar at Yale University, New Haven, CT Swiss National Science Foundation grant N° 162220

February 2017

07/2013 – 08/2013	Essex Summer School in Social Science Data Analysis Introduction to Duration Models (with Matt Golder) Swiss National Science Foundation grant N^{o} 148760
03/2006 – 06/2006	Milner International College of English, Perth Language stay, Certificate in Advanced English, Grade: A

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

02/2011 – 07/2012	KV Zürich Business School, Zurich Subject teacher in adult vocational training (civics)

JOB EXPERIENCE

01/2016 –	Political Science Department, University of Pennsylvania Predoctoral fellow
01/2013 – 12/2016	Centre for Comparative and International Studies, ETH Zurich Research assistant
02/2012 – 12/2015	Centre for Democracy Studies Aarau (ZDA), Aarau (University of Zurich) Research assistant
02/2011 – 07/2012	KV Zürich Business School, Zurich (part-time) Subject teacher in adult vocational training (civics)
03/2008 – 01/2011	Pokeracademy.ch, Zurich (part-time) Poker-dealer
06/2007 – 06/2008	Cambridge Examination Centre, Winterthur (part-time) Examination supervisor
08/2006 – 11/2006	GE Money Bank, Zürich-Altstetten (full-time) Clerk in charge of credit cards
07/2005 – 02/2006	Cindy's Diner, Winterthur (full-time) Ceck-out

REFEREED JOURNAL ARTICLES, CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS, AND BOOK CHAPTERS

Mendez, Fernando, and Micha Germann (2016). "Contested Sovereignty: Mapping Referendums on Sovereignty over Time and Space." *British Journal of Political Science*, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0007123415000563

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Sambanis, Nicholas, Micha Germann, and Andreas Schädel. „Introducing SDM: A New Data Set on Self-Determination Movements with an Application to the Reputational Theory of Conflict." Under review with the *Journal of Conflict Resolution.*

Wheatley, Jonathan, and Micha Germann. "Assumptions behind Two-Dimensional Maps in VAAs: Insights from Choose4Greece." In: Nicolas Tsapatsoulis, and Fernando Mendez (eds.), *Voting Advice Applications in Modern Political Campaigns and Elections.* Hershey, PA: IGI Global, under review.

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Germann, Micha (2012). "Multinational Investment, Trade, and the Right to Physical Integrity: Context Matters." *CIS Working Paper Nr. 74, 2012.*

ONGOING PROJECTS

Germann, Micha, and Kostas Gemenis. "Getting out the Vote with Voting Advice Applications."

GRANTS

$22,500	Swiss National Science Foundation, grant n° 162220 for a six months stay at Yale University as a Visiting Assistant in Research (VAR)
1,000 CHF	Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences, grant for participation at 2015 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association
2,650 CHF	Swiss National Science Foundation, grant n° 148760 for participation at the 2013 Essex Summer School in Social Science Data Analysis

PRESENTATIONS AT CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

74th Annual Conference of the Midwest Political Science Association, April 7-10, 2016, Chicago, IL.

European Network of Conflict Research Meeting, October 1-2, 2015, Barcelona.

111th Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, September 3-6, 2015, San Francisco, CA.

65th Annual International Conference of the Political Studies Association (PSA), March 30-April 1, 2015, Sheffield.

8th General Conference of the European Consortium for Political Research, September 3-6, 2014, Glasgow.

5th Graduate Student Conference of the European Consortium for Political Research, July 3-5, 2014, Innsbruck.

2014 Annual Convention of the Swiss Political Science Association, January 30-31, 2014, Berne.

EU Vox Workshop (University of Twente), November 15, 2013, Enschede.

7th General Conference of the European Consortium for Political Research, September 4-7, 2013, Bordeaux.

February 2017

Workshop IP-VAA'12: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Voting Advice Applications: The Case of Choose4Greece and Choose4Cyprus, November 22-24, 2012, Limassol.

26th Convention of the Italian Political Science Association, September 13-15, 2012, Rome.

1st Annual Conference of the European Political Science Association, June 16-18, 2011, Dublin.

SKILLS

Languages	German: mother tongue English: fluent French: good
IT	Stata, R, SPSS, MLwin, LaTex, MS Office
Drivers' License	Category B (<3,500 kg)

OTHER INFORMATION

Date of Birth	08/08/1985
Place of Birth	Schaffhausen
Nationality	Swiss
Marital Status	Single

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